The aspirations of marginalised groups:
A rapid review of the literature

Final report

Dawn Griesbach
Griesbach & Associates

May 2014

Table of contents

i

Executive Summary

1. In March 2014, the Big Lottery Fund Scotland commissioned Griesbach & Associates to carry out a rapid review of the literature to identify the aspirations of marginalised groups and communities in Scotland. The aim of the review was to find out about the aspirations of groups whose views, opinions and aspirations tend not to be sought or heard.

2. The review was carried out over a four-week period between April and May 2014. The objectives were to answer four questions:

    - What does the available evidence tell us about this group's / community's aspirations?
    - Can anything be ascertained about the relationship between people's aspirations and other circumstances in their lives?
    - What do the people in these groups / communities think would help them to achieve their aspirations?
    - To what extent are there similar, or different, aspirations among different groups (including those living in rural or urban areas)?

3. Thirteen marginalised groups were the subject of the review. These were: looked-after children and young people / care leavers; disabled people; older people with high support needs; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people; gypsies and travellers; carers; single parents; night workers; refugees and asylum seekers; migrant workers; sex workers; offenders and ex-offenders; and problem drug users.

Looked after children and young people / care leavers – Section 2

4. Looked after young people / care leavers have many of the same aspirations for their future as other young people their age. These aspirations involve becoming independent, finding a job, pursuing education or training. In addition, like many other young people, some do not have a clear idea of a future vocation when they leave care.

5. Things that help this group to succeed are: having people in their lives who care for them; experiencing stability; being given high expectations; receiving encouragement and support; and being able to participate and achieve.

6. Further education providers should ensure that the young person's aspirations, previous educational attainment and personal circumstances are taken into account helping them to decide on courses.

Disabled people – Section 3

7. Disabled young people had a wide range of occupational aspirations, and many also planned to take up further and higher education, and wanted to become more independent from their parents.

8. The aspirations of disabled black young people were sometimes tempered by fears of disability discrimination and / or racism among employers and a lack of information about the advice and support available to them for moving into higher education or work.

9. Some differences were found in the aspirations of young people with special educational needs (SEN) depending on whether they attended a mainstream or a special school. Young people with SEN attending mainstream schools were more likely than those attending special schools to say they planned to seek employment after age 16. However, among those who were planning to continue their education, those from mainstream schools aspired to higher level courses. Those from mainstream schools were also more likely to aspire to higher status jobs, living independently from their parents and to have families of their own.

10. In terms of housing aspirations, not all disabled people (including disabled young people) necessarily desired or felt confident enough in their skills to aspire to greater independence from their families. Those that did, did not always have adequate information about the options available to them, or about the practical preparations required for living more independently. Greater support and advice is needed for this group, particularly for those who live with elderly parents, relatives or other carers.

Older people – Section 4

11. Older people's aspirations for 'a good life' focused on things that they valued and which they felt would help them to achieve social, physical and psychological well-being.

12. Key themes included: people knowing and caring about you; having a sense of belonging to a local community; being able to contribute and being valued for what you do; being treated as an equal and an adult; being given respect for your routines and commitments; being able to choose how to spend your time and who you spend your time with; having and retaining your sense of self; being able to express views and feelings; having control over your surroundings; and getting out and about.

13. In terms of housing aspirations, in general, people wanted to remain in their own homes if possible. Sheltered housing was seen to be the preferred option for the future if physical health declined, rather than a care home.

LGBT people – Section 5

14. There was little information available on the wider aspirations of LGBT people. However, there were three studies that all focused on the future housing aspirations of older LGBT people, and all of these had essentially the same findings.

15. Older LGBT people, have a preference for remaining in their own homes for as long as possible. Sheltered housing was seen to be preferable to a care home for those whose health was declining. However, among this group, there was a great deal of anxiety about being victimised for being gay if they had to move into either a sheltered housing complex or a care home. Fears were also expressed about possible lack of sensitivity or homophobia among staff in these types of housing settings.

Gypsies and travellers – Section 6

16. Just one study was identified on the aspirations of gypsies and travellers. This focused on the housing aspirations of older people in this community, and highlighted that this group would strongly prefer to be able to maintain certain aspects of their travelling lifestyle.

17. In particular, there was a strong dislike for 'bricks and mortar' accommodation. People preferred to remain living within their own communities, at existing caravan sites, but with extra care available for those who needed it.

Carers – Section 7

18. Carers have to consider a range of factors when deciding about whether to try to combine paid work with their (unpaid) caring responsibilities. These included: finances; flexibility of employers; working hours; availability of other formal or informal supports; the care recipient's needs and wishes; and distances and times travelled to work.

19. Carers in rural areas faced additional barriers to employment. These were poor public transport, travel times and distances, and lack of availability of local paid carers and support services. Social isolation is also an issue for rural carers. Better supports for rural carers could include wider respite opportunities, transport solutions, interventions to reduce social isolation, combining social opportunities with education, and using the telephone to provide information, support and education.

20. Outcomes desired by carers in their contact with social care services included (among other things): having a life and identity of their own (apart from their role as a carer); having control over their life; maintaining their physical and emotional well-being; and having adequate resources; and feeling skilled and informed.

21. For young carers, frequent non-attendance at school can result in a failure to attain any educational qualifications. This then has implications for the young person's ability to find work in the future and ultimately to achieve independence. Where services are provided in these situations, they are sometimes felt to be inappropriate, intrusive or too costly.

Single parents – Section 8

22. The aspirations of single parents were closely associated with their educational qualifications and previous work experience.

23. Practical considerations (regarding working hours and the cost and accessibility of childcare) tend to outweigh all other work-related aspirations for single parents. These practical issues may act either as barriers or as facilitators for a single parent wishing to take up work.

24. Beyond the practical considerations, single parents' work-related aspirations may be thwarted by a lack of suitable (flexible) higher-level jobs. In addition, supportive (or unsupportive) managers and colleagues can often make the difference for single parents in being able to balance work and childcare responsibilities.

Night workers – Section 9

25. There was some evidence that people who work nights do so out of choice – because such a working arrangement helps them to balance work with child care and other family commitments. Some also appreciate the greater sense of freedom and control that they have in working nights.

26. However, there was also evidence that night workers are often poorly paid and that their health and family and social relationships suffer as a result of their night working.

Refugees and asylum seekers – Section 10

27. All the studies that explored the employment or career aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers found a very strong desire to work. However, all studies also found very low levels of employment, despite very highly skilled employment histories in their countries of origin. Those who were in work were most often working in very part-time, poorly paid jobs on fixed terms contracts. Few were using their skills in their current work.

28. Barriers to work were identified as inadequate English language skills, not having permission to work (during the period of enforced unemployment while an asylum application was being considered), lack of UK work experience and references, employment discrimination and an inability to afford the necessary training / education.

29. For refugees wanting to start their own businesses, a lack of understanding of UK business culture, and a lack of information about how to start up a company were also barriers.

30. For refugees who aspired to further / higher education, childcare issues and an inability to provide proof of their existing educational qualifications were further barriers.

31. In terms of housing aspirations, factors such as the physical characteristics (including size) and conditions of the property were often cited as reasons for wanting to move house. Personal safety and the ability to avoid racial harassment were also important in relation to choosing a home. Preferred housing was self-contained (not flats) in safe neighbourhoods.

32. Many refugees aspired to owning their own homes, but did not believe this could be possible because of the difficulties of saving sufficient money for a deposit. Thus, of the choices that appeared to be available to them, most expressed a preference for stable social housing.

Migrant workers – Section 11

33. The primary motivation for migrants in coming to the UK / Scotland was an economic one – people came to work and earn money, and when they first arrived in the country, most intended to return to their home countries after a period of time. Other reasons included: to learn English, to see and experience another country, to visit / join friends and family, and to study.

34. Factors that influence people's intentions to stay in the UK are related to: the ability to find appropriate work (jobs that use their skills and training), and family connections back home.

35. All the studies identified difficulties with migrants being able to obtain safe, good quality, affordable accommodation. Most had the experience of living in private rented accommodation and had several changes of address in a short period of time after arriving in the UK.

36. Migrants would find it helpful to be able to receive information about the availability of social rented accommodation, and how the allocations system works.

Sex workers – Section 12

37. The evidence gathered on the aspirations of sex workers presents a mixed picture of people's reasons for initially getting involved in sex work – for some, it was to support a drug habit, and for others (particularly migrant sex workers) it was seen as a way of making more money. For this latter group, sex work was seen as a way of helping them to achieve aspirations for personal and / or career development.

38. Those who got involved in sex work as a result of drug addiction reported a desire to get off drugs, be good parents and live normal lives with a job and a nice house. There were multiple barriers to these aspirations, however. These included: a lack of capacity and motivation to seek help; a lack of flexibility in services when help is sought; difficult relationships with service providers; lack of 'joined-up' care to address multiple needs; lack of ongoing support; and lack of information about services.

Problem drug users – Section 13

39. The research on the aspirations of problem drug users focused on their aspirations for recovery. In relation to this, their plans and aspirations were: continuing recovery; establishing a normal, stable domestic life; seeking pleasure and contentment from personal relationships and the small things in life; and finding a meaningful occupation that would allow them to 'put something back'. The most common desire was to get more education and go into counselling or drugs work of some kind.

40. Barriers to recovery included: sexual partners or (former) friends who also use drugs; living in unstable housing; difficulties in accessing treatment, rehab or psychological therapies; and continued illicit drug use.

41. The things that help drug users to recover were reported to be: residential rehab; prescribed methadone; positive relationships; self-help and support groups; access to psychological therapies; stable housing; and employment and training.

Offenders and ex-offenders – Section 14

42. There was little information available about the aspirations of offenders or ex-offenders. This is a group whose aspirations are seldom heard, although there is some evidence (related to supporting prisoners' transitions back to the community) which is relevant.

43. The ability to acquire skills, training and qualifications while in prison; the availability of stable housing and support (including support from peers) are important factors that help offenders to make a successful transition to the community when they are released from prison.

44. Barriers for people in achieving their aspirations for training / education in prison and their aspiration for work and housing upon release were identified as: having a criminal record (which made it difficult to obtain employment); a lack information and inconsistent support; and difficulties in accessing courses, or the resources to participate in them while in prison.

1. Introduction and background

1.1   In March 2014, the Big Lottery Fund Scotland commissioned Griesbach & Associates to carry out a rapid review of the literature to identify the aspirations of marginalised groups and communities in Scotland. The aim of the review was to find out about the aspirations of groups whose views, opinions and aspirations tend not to be sought or heard. This report presents the findings of that review.

What is meant by 'aspiration'?

A hope or ambition of achieving something – Oxford Dictionaries online

A strong desire to achieve something, such as success – Collins English dictionary

1.2   The term 'aspiration' may be defined as a goal or ambition. Its meaning incorporates not only the vague concepts of a 'hope' or a 'wish', but also the more concrete ideas of an 'intention' or 'objective'. Quaglia and Cobb (1996) suggest that aspirations can be defined as an individual's "ability to identify and set goals for the future, while being inspired in the present to work towards those goals".[1] Thus an aspiration is not just something that a person **wants** to achieve; but it is also something which they believe they **can** achieve.

1.3   Aspirations may take many forms and they often change over time. They are determined by a combination of people's circumstances, their past achievements, their motivations, and by their expectations of the future. Therefore, different people may hold very different aspirations, for example: *"to get a job", "to be the head of the company", "to learn to drive", "to climb Kilimanjaro", "to walk again after the accident", "to be the First Minister"*.

1.4   Gutman & Akerman (2008) note that, in a political and research context, the interest in aspirations has largely focused on the educational and / or career aspirations of young people.[2] The reasons for this are partly that educational and career aspirations are the keys to social mobility, and thus the enablers of other aspirations that people may have.

1.5   Fewer studies have focused on the wider life aspirations of young people, and this may be because life aspirations are seen to be less suitable as a focus for government policy interventions or support by public services. For example, Gutman & Akerman highlight one study which sought to identify the wider aims and aspirations of disadvantaged young people aged 14-25 in the UK.[3] This study found that the most important priority for this group of young people was having a

---

[1] RJ Quaglia & CD Casey (1996) Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 12:* 127-132.
[2] LM Gutman & R Akerman (2008) *Determinants of aspirations.* Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, research report 27. Institute of Education, University of London.
[3] The research covered four groups of disadvantaged young people: (i) the unemployed; (ii) educational underachievers; (iii) ex-offenders and current prisoners; and (iv) those in or leaving care aged 16-21.

family, followed by having an interesting job, a nice home, and making lots of money (Princes Trust, 2004).[4]

1.6   Guterman & Akerman point out that the notion of high versus low aspirations is subjective. In their study on the social determinants of aspirations, they challenge the assumption that higher educational and occupational aspirations are likely to be held by more motivated individuals while lower aspirations imply less commitment to and valuing of education. They note that: "The meaning and importance of aspirations vary according to the context in which people live as well as their own individual characteristics and development." Thus, high aspirations for an individual with certain life circumstances may be considered low aspirations for another individual with different life circumstances.

1.7   There is also a large body of research on housing aspirations. Much of this research focuses on the aspirations of the general population to either rent or own their own homes, and there is an implicit assumption in this research that most people aspire to home ownership. However, there are also numerous studies which explore the things that are important to people in a home – which highlight the importance of affordability and feeling safe in a neighbourhood. Indeed, research carried out by Shelter (2005) found that, for people on low incomes, a "good home" is more important than owning a home. And a good home is one which is safe, secure, warm, comfortable, spacious, with enough bedrooms and in a good, safe neighbourhood.[5]

1.8   In relation to the housing aspirations of marginalised groups, Steele (2010) notes that there is a distinction to be made between housing **needs** and housing **aspirations**. The former relates to **requirements** while the latter relates to an individual's **preferences** and the manner in which an individual's needs can be met by a range of their preferred options.[6] At the same time, Steele acknowledges that people's housing aspirations are often strongly influenced by their beliefs about what is available to meet their particular needs, irrespective of what their preferred housing would be.

What is meant by 'marginalised groups'?

1.9   The focus of this review is on the aspirations of certain marginalised groups.

> Marginalisation – or social exclusion – refers to the failure of society to provide certain individuals and groups with those rights and benefits normally available to its members, such as employment, adequate housing, health care, education and training, etc. – *Collins English Dictionary*

1.10   Marginalised groups are systematically prevented from having access to the same opportunities and resources that are available to ordinary members of a society – often because of certain characteristics that they have, including those related

---

[4] Princes Trust (2004) *Reaching the hardest to reach*. The Prince's Trust. London.
[5] Shelter (2005) *Home truths. The reality behind our housing aspirations*.
[6] Steele A (2010) A qualitative assessment of the housing needs and aspirations of older people in Leicestershire. Report for Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Partnership (HMA).

gender, culture, nationality, race, language, disability, age, sexual orientation, religion or economic status. Marginalisation (or social exclusion) may also result because of an individual's perceived status, behaviour and / or criminality. Anyone whose behaviour is seen to deviate from socially held norms may be marginalised. The following marginalised groups were included in this review:

- Looked-after children and young people / care leavers
- Disabled people
- Older people (in particular, older people with high dependency needs)
- Lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBT) people
- Gypsies and travellers
- Carers
- Single parents
- Night workers
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Migrant workers
- Sex workers
- People who misuse drugs or alcohol
- Former prisoners / ex-offenders

Objectives of the review

1.11   The aim of this project was to carry out a rapid review of UK research literature to identify the aspirations of marginalised groups. Specifically, the review sought to identify evidence which enabled the voices of these groups to be heard.

1.12   The objectives were to answer four questions:

- What does the available evidence tell us about this group's / community's aspirations?
- Can anything be ascertained about the relationship between people's aspirations and other circumstances in their lives?
- What do the people in these groups / communities think would help them to achieve their aspirations?
- To what extent are there similar, or different, aspirations among different groups (including those living in rural or urban areas)?

Methods

1.13   The review was carried out during a six-week period from March – May 2014. Because of the very tight timescales for the project, it was not possible to carry out an extensive and systematic review of the literature.

1.14   Relevant research evidence was identified through title and keyword searches of three main sources:

- peer-reviewed journal articles available through the National Library for Scotland's online bibliographic databases
- a general search of the internet

- a search of relevant key websites.[7]

1.15 Searches were carried out on the term "aspiration" (or "aspirations") or "future" or "plans" AND one or more marginalised groups (for example, "offenders", "sex workers", "carers", "migrant workers" and so forth). Studies were included, irrespective of the size of the project, if they met the following criteria:

- primary research involving **direct** consultation with one or more marginalised groups using qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods approaches (interviews, focus groups and surveys)
- reviews focusing on primary literature that had originally involved direct consultation with these groups.
- small-scale consultations presented in video format
- research conducted in the UK
- published from 2000 onwards.

---

[7] The websites of key research organisations such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, Scottish Government social research and various UK government divisions, along with the websites of relevant umbrella organisations were also searched for relevant publications.

2. Looked after children and young people

2.1   This section discusses the aspirations of looked after children and young people (referred to hereafter as LAC). While there is a great deal of research on the **experiences** of LAC of being in care, and their transitions to independence, fewer studies were identified that specifically asked LAC about their aspirations. Most studies started from the assumption that LAC would wish to find a job after leaving care, and therefore research tended to focus on the things that helped or hindered them from doing this. Nevertheless, four studies were identified. Three specifically asked about the aspirations of this group, and a fourth study explored care leavers' views about the things that had helped them to achieve success in their lives:

- A collection of 450 photos of messages from young care leavers made available on Flickr by the Young People's Benchmarking Forum (YPBF). The photos were taken during National Care Leavers Week (26 Oct – 2 Nov) in 2011. Among them were messages that spoke of the young person's aspirations and achievements.

- A video produced by Edinburgh Care Leavers (undated) of eight care leavers talking about what they would like to do in the future.

- Connelly *et al* (2011) carried out an evaluation of a programme which aimed to help support LAC aged 15-19 in further education. The programme included three projects (two involving urban FE colleges and one involving a rural college). Among other things, the study involved interviews with 82 young people to find out about their college experiences and aspirations for the future.

- Happer *et al* (2006) interviewed 30 individuals in Scotland who had been looked after or who were moving towards independence after having been looked after. Interviewees were asked to tell their stories of being looked after and what helped them to achieve the success they had experienced in their lives. 'Success' was defined as: (i) being able to make and sustain meaningful relationships; and (ii) being engaged in some kind of work, education, training or meaningful activity. The study participants were nominated by local authorities and voluntary organisations. The study sample was then self-selecting, in that participants opted to take part.

Facts and figures
- As of 31 July 2013, there were 16,041 children looked after by local authorities in Scotland. This was a one per cent decrease from 2012. Prior to that, the number of children looked after had increased every year from 2001 to 2012.

- Local authorities have duty to provide advice, guidance and assistance for young people who – at the point they leave care – have reached minimum school leaving age, referred to as 'aftercare services'. For the young people receiving aftercare where their education/employment status was known, 15-16 year olds were most likely to be in education, training or employment, at 58 per cent. The age groups least likely to be in education, training or employment was 19-21 year-olds at 38 per cent.

Care leavers' aspirations

2.2   A thematic analysis was carried out of the 450+ messages on the YPBF Flickr site which specifically related to care leavers' aspirations. This analysis indicated that the aspirations of this group included:

- achieving independence
- learning new skills
- plans for further / higher education
- pursuing a wide range of specific vocations.

2.3   In terms of plans for further / higher education or desired vocations, there is insufficient information to be able to say if there are any differences between the aspirations of this group and the aspirations of any group of young people of a similar age. It is worth noting that some of the young people in this group expressed pleasant surprise about achieving things that they did not previously think they could. (See Box 2.1)

Box 2.1: Aspirations of care leavers, YPBMF, National Care Leavers week, 2011

The following are a small sample of the messages on the YPBMF Flickr website about young care leavers' aspirations.[8] No information was available about the age or sex of the young person who had written each message.

"Living life how I want."

"My aspiration is to work with CIC (children in care) where I can offer support and use my experience and knowledge of being in care myself."

"I thought that I wouldn't have a chance of getting into the police force! Looks like I can. I am studying law now."

"My aspiration for the future is to start an access course and do a social work degree!!"

"My aspiration is hairdressing."

"I came in this country with nothing, and now I've got most stuff I wished for. I'm at college right now, studying performing art and after that would like to go to uni to do my degree in French."

"My aspiration is working with animals."

"My aspiration is to work in retail or child care."

"I am learning to cook."

"I'm going to university to do a 2 year course in music tech!"

"I used to get in trouble all the time but I have changed my life around. I just learned how to swim and I am going back to college."

"I have discovered that I am good at wood work and now I know what I want to do with my future."

"I am training to become an electrician."

"Love life, live life. I have just got my flat, I am so happy and now the sky is the limit."

"My foster carers believed in me when no one else did. I am now studying to become an Outdoor Pursuit instructor. I want to work in an activity centre with children with special needs."

"My goal is to be a professional chef and work on a cruise ship."

"My goal is to become a social worker / support worker for children and young people."

"One day I'll be the boss!!"

"I'm going to make myself proud."

---

[8] The website also contains a large number of messages about what young care leavers felt they had achieved since leaving care.

2.4 The aspirations of the eight young people recorded by Edinburgh Care Leavers were very similar (see Box 2.2), and included:

- specific vocations ranging from veterinary nurse to police officer, and from professional footballer to hairdresser
- a desire for a certain lifestyle (a comfortable, peaceful life without trouble)
- a desire to have a family.

2.5 However, like many young people, not everyone was sure what they wanted to do, and some individuals suggested that they might like more than one vocation.

Box 2.2: Aspirations of eight care leavers, video produced by Edinburgh Care Leavers

A video produced by Edinburgh Care Leavers (see http://vimeo.com/66143902) captures information about the statements of eight care leavers about what they hope the future holds for them:

"An animal veterinary nurse." (Male)

"I hope to become a police officer. And a nurse. And work with children. (Laughs) All of them!" (Female)

"I hope I can get a very good job. Make at least around 25 to 50 grand a year. And just live a peaceful life. Keep myself out of trouble." (Male)

"My hopes for the future – I don't really know yet, as I don't really like looking to the future. As I said, the advice I've been given is don't look in the future and don't look in the past. There's not really a finish line in everyone's life. Just keep going for what you want and make the best of what you've got." (Male)

"I want to go to college and do something… People tell me I'd be good as a counsellor because of my own experiences and stuff. So, I might take that on. And after that, I'd like to be a mum, yeah, and have my own wee family." (Female)

"Would like to get on a team – a football team. Try to play for Scotland. People tell me I have to try to do my best." (Male)

"Be a hairdresser." (Female)

"Be a care assistant." (Female)

Engaging LAC in further education

2.6 In Connelly *et al,* 82 young people attending college were asked about their immediate intentions and their (longer-term) plans for the future. Most young people's immediate plans were to get a job and/or do another college course. A small number already had jobs, while others were hoping to find jobs. Some already had places on courses, but most were planning to do further study, or thinking about applying. Some respondents were unclear about the future, wanting to 'sort themselves out' first or 'explore options'. However, in general, aspirations for getting jobs and work dominated. About half of 55 employment-related responses did not specify a particular kind of job, but the others stated a vocational preference, including three young people who hoped to run their own businesses and five who aspired to careers requiring degree-level qualifications.

2.7   This study found that the factors that supported participation in further education by this group were:

- supportive and understanding relationships
- support in developing and maintaining relationships
- approaches to learning which are active, relevant and enjoyable
- college staff who show understanding of their out-of-college lives (some of the young people in the study were also carers for family members)
- support in their out-of-college lives, though not necessarily provided by college staff.

2.8   In general, the young people who took part in this study felt that their experiences of their education and social life at college were positive ones, and that the course gave them the opportunity to progress educationally and to gain qualifications required for entry to work or higher level vocational courses.

2.9   However, the study also found that fewer than half of students on assessed courses had achieved 70% or more of the assessed units required for their course. The main reason for this was that the students had left prematurely before completing the course. Moreover, some young people suggested that the college courses had failed to match learning opportunities to their aspirations and / or existing level of educational attainment. For example: (All quotes from Connelly *et al* (2011).)

> "Well actually I think they could have informed me about all of my options and not just assumed that I wanted to be on a certain course at a certain level." (Female, age 16)

> "I wish I could have just gone on to a mainstream course without doing this one first." (Male, age 15)

> "Not sure what course I'm on but I think it is the wrong one." (Male, age 17)

> "I wish I could be on a different course as I feel I am over qualified for this one." (Female, age 20)

> "Sometimes I don't like doing computers – we only mess around and I don't learn anything which is what some of them like but I want to move on to other things." (Female, age 16).

> "[I] didn't want to do hairdressing but feel that's my only option if I move into mainstream next year." (Female, age 15).

2.10 Connelly *et al* made a range of recommendations which are intended to improve the engagement and retention of care leavers in post-school education. Those most relevant to this review were that:

- Leaving care teams, advisers from Skills Development Scotland and colleges should help young people to 'present' themselves in ways that allow their different achievements to be taken into account and recognised for entry to mainstream programmes. It is also important to challenge assumptions that

looked after young people are more suited to particular (often lower-level) courses. Looked after young people should be given information about the broad range of course options available to them. (Rec 4)

- The tendency to reinforce gender stereotypes through recruitment to courses should be avoided, as should failure to match learning opportunities to young people's aspirations and existing level of educational attainment. (Rec 9)

What helps LAC to succeed

2.11 In Happer *et al's* study of 'successful care leavers', they identified five factors that were critical to the success of the young people they interviewed: (All quotes are from Happer *et al,* 2006)

- **Having people who care about you:** There were four important aspects to these caring relationships: (i) feelings of attachment between the child and the adults; (ii) feelings of warmth, safety and being nurtured; (iii) feelings of belonging and being included; and (iv) feelings of being trusted and trusting others.

  "They treat you like part of the family. They're like parents, basically – substitute parents, good parents. You can speak to them about anything." (Male)

  "Things were pretty bad. My mum was always drinking. We never really had much. Being in care changed my life so much. From having this really, really unstable environment to this family environment where everybody took a shower every night and we had decent food to eat. It was just great." (Male)

- **Experiencing stability:** The 'successful' care leavers in this study appeared to have experienced fewer moves, and therefore greater stability than is generally the case for LAC in Scotland. It was clear that the participants thought stability was an important factor in their success. The nature of this stability included: maintaining the same school and social worker over time, being able to see old friends, taking part in familiar activities, and keeping in touch with family members.

  "There was consistency there and as an adult now with children of my own I can say that consistency is an enormous help in a situation where the rest of your life has been inconsistent. You've had parents, you didn't always know if they were going to be sober or drunk, violent or not violent, there or not there – to have routine and consistency, to be able to depend on things, that was invaluable." (Female)

- **Being given high expectations:** Many of the participants in this study talked about the impact on them of the expectations of others. Where important adults had high expectations of the individual, this appeared to have contributed to their success.

  "I've just got my John Muir Trust award. I didn't think I was going to stick it. I was just trying to prove a point to myself that I could actually do it. I was

totally chuffed when I got it. With my mum – she was like "Oh! Well done." She was as proud as anything of me." (Male)

"Through school my teacher was like, "you should try" ... so I did my highers and things ... then I was accepted ... then at the end of the year I got a first class honours degree... that was my success – going through uni and getting that final mark." (Male)

- **Receiving encouragement and support:** Support was provided by foster carers, residential workers, teachers and social workers, friends and partners. Encouragement and support described by the participants included: being mentored; being helped to understand the past and the present; someone who believed in their ability; and an unwavering commitment.

"She (social worker) was an absolute godsend to me. She knew I wasn't an angel, she knew I was bad but she also knew why I was bad. She knew it was attention, also the fact that I was just a teenager. She was an absolute godsend, she saw me through everything. She just took the time." (Female)

- **Being able to participate and achieve:** Participants in the study talked about: finding something they were good at; the influence of their own personality; learning to set personal goals; achieving in education; success in employment; participating in communities; having new experiences.

"I always used to watch out the window at all the kids out playing and never go out and play with them. And it's just through perseverance and encouragement I got more confidence but really the dancing had a lot to do with it. Being good at dancing was a real boost." (Female)

"I don't know, I always felt different somehow, like I wanted more from life." (Female)

"I joined the army in January and I've done my training and just passed out. I've got loads of qualifications and met lots of good mates. It's amazing. A big achievement because I never thought I would make it. I've done it and I pleased everybody and it's a great feeling." (Male)

Summary

- Looked after young people / care leavers have many of the same aspirations for their future as other young people their age. These aspirations involve becoming independent, finding a job, pursuing education or training. In addition, like many other young people, some do not have a clear idea of a future vocation when they leave care.
- Things that help this group to succeed include: having people in their lives who care for them; experiencing stability; being given high expectations; receiving encouragement and support; and being able to participate and achieve.
- Further education providers should ensure that the young person's aspirations, previous educational attainment and personal circumstances are taken into account helping them to decide on courses.

3. Disabled people

3.1　This section looks at the aspirations of disabled people – both those with physical disabilities and learning disabilities. Much of the focus of this section is on the aspirations of disabled young people, including those of black disabled young people. However, one study looks as the aspirations of (older) adults with a learning disability, and some of the individuals in the young persons' studies were in their 30s. The aspirations of older people (60+) with high support needs are discussed in Section 4.

3.2　The information in this section comes from five sources:

- Casey *et al* (2006) was a large-scale survey (using semi-structured interviews) of 1,005 15 and 16 year old young people with special educational needs (SEN) and their parents in England. The purpose of the study was to find out whether there were any systematic differences in the aspirations of disabled young people depending on what type of schooling they attended (i.e. mainstream vs. special schools). All of the young people who took part in the study were in their final year of compulsory schooling. The study focused on young people with two types of SEN: (i) emotional and behavioural difficulties (EBD) (including attention deficit disorder or attention deficit hyperactivity disorder) and (ii) moderate learning difficulties (MLD). Young people were asked about their aspirations and expectations for future study (where and at what level), type of employment and independent living. Questions about employment aspirations took the form 'what kind of job would you like to do?'

- Dean (2003) explored the housing aspirations and experiences of 30 young disabled people aged 18-34 who had a physical or sensory impairment or a learning difficulty. The research was conducted in three areas in Scotland: two urban and one rural. People in the three groups did not differ in terms of the type and severity of impairment, age distribution, occupation, family income, educational achievement, gender or other characteristics.

- Bowey & McGlaughlin (2005) explored the views, aspirations and concerns of adults with a learning disability who lived with an older family carer (usually a parent or sibling). The study involved interviews with 41 adults with a learning disability who ranged in age from twenty to eighty-two. All lived with carers aged over seventy.

- Bignall & Butt (2000) looked at how young black disabled people manage the transition between childhood and independence, and what independence and independent living means to them. The study is based on interviews with 44 young disabled people of Asian, African and African–Caribbean origin. The interviewees were aged 16-30 and were from across England. They had a range of impairments (including learning difficulties, sensory impairments and / or communication needs).

- a short video produced by the UK-based charity, Ambitious about Autism, in which 12 young people with special educational needs discuss what they would like to do when they leave school. No details were given about the ages of the young people in the video.

Facts and figures[9]

Population

- In 2011, 1.04m people in Scotland had a long-term activity-limiting health problem or disability. This was approximately 20 per cent of the Scottish population – the same as reported in the 2001 Census.

Education

- In Scottish higher education 8.3% of all students declare a disability; in further education 8.2 per cent of all students declare a disability.
- Degrees are held by 12.5 per cent of all disabled persons; half the rate of non-disabled people.

Employment

- The employment rate for disabled people in Scotland was 46.3% compared to an overall employment rate of 70.7 per cent.
- 47.8 per cent of people with a disability were economically inactive.
- However, self-employment rates tend to be higher for disabled people. The self-employment rate for disabled people was 13.6 per cent compared to 11.1 per cent for non-disabled people.

Housing

- 59 per cent of adults with a long-term illness or a disability live in owner occupied housing, 35 per cent in social rented accommodation and 8 per cent in the private rented sector. The corresponding figures for adults with no long-term illness or disability are 71 per cent, 15 per cent and 14 per cent respectively.

Occupational aspirations

3.3   Box 3.1 below provides a transcription of the responses of 12 young people interviewed by Ambitious about Autism when they were asked: 'What do you want to do when you leave school?'

3.4   An analysis of this data shows that this group of young people had a very wide range of occupational aspirations – including those that would require further or higher education after school. The boys in this group were more likely than the girls to aspire to occupations that would require higher education.

---

[9] Scottish Government statistics on disabled people, 2011. See
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/People/Equality/Equalities/DataGrid/Disability

Box 3.1: Responses from 12 young people with special educational needs to the question: 'What do you want to do when you leave school?'

"When I grow up I want to be a school teacher." (Male)

"I want to be an actor in films, and [do] voice over." (Male)

"Maybe become a singer. Not sure." (Female)

"Probably something involved in teaching." (Male)

"I was thinking of bus driving." (Male)

"Be a scientist." (Male)

"A hairdresser." (Female)

"A director for some movies." (Male)

"I'd like to be involved in sport. I don't know what yet, but as soon as I can, I'd like to try and get my coaching badges." (Male)

"It'd be nice to get a job as a research chemist." (Male)

"After school, I'd like to be a hairdresser and go to a hospice and stuff, to make people feel good about themselves." (Female)

"I'd like to be a singer." (Female)

"A swimming teacher. For people with special needs." (Female)

Source: www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/about_autism/real_life/young_people.cfm

Relationship between aspirations and type of schooling

3.5   In their study of young people with special educational needs, Casey *et al* (2006) found that young people with SEN attending special schools were more likely than young people attending mainstream schools to say that they planned to continue with their post-16 education in the same school. Those who were in mainstream schools were more likely than those in special schools to say that they planned to seek employment.

3.6   In both schools, among those who planned to continue their education, young people attending special schools were less likely than those in mainstream schools to aspire to higher level courses.

3.7   In terms of future occupations, young people attending special schools were more likely than those in mainstream schools to aspire to manual (lower-paid) jobs, while those in mainstream schools were more likely to aspire to higher status employment. Young people attending mainstream schools were also much more likely to want to live independently from their parents and relatives and they were also more likely to aspire to have families of their own.

3.8   The authors concluded that young people with MLD or EBD educated in mainstream schools had higher aspirations for their future academic and vocational achievement and independent living than those educated in special schools. They suggest that one reason for this difference may relate to the broader peer group that young people in mainstream schools have access to. Another reason might be that those with MLD or EBD attending special schools have greater learning disabilities than those attending mainstream schools and their aspirations are lower for this reason.

The aspirations of young black disabled people

3.9   In their study of the views and experiences of young black disabled people on independent living, Bignall & Butt found that the majority of the young people who took part had clear ambitions and ideas about their future. These included: (All quotes from Bignall & Butt (2000).)

- **Further education:** Many of the young people saw the need to obtain further qualifications or special qualifications in order to get a job. Some saw the possibility of studying at college or university as an opportunity of achieving greater independence from family. However, others saw their impairment as a barrier to higher education, and this was sometimes because they did not have accurate information about what support they could expect while studying.

  "After doing this course, I'm hoping to go on to training. And after my training I'm hoping to get a job in a clothing shop or something – retail working. And hopefully, hopefully about … five or ten years' time be self-employed." (Male)

- **Getting a job:** For most of the participants in this study, future ambitions revolved around work, and many had clear ideas about what they wanted to do and how they could achieve it. However, those who were older (aged 20 and above) perceived difficulties in getting a job and there was a view that disability discrimination and / or racism among employers might be barriers for people in achieving their ambitions. Again, most lacked relevant information, especially about possible support at work, and this affected their aspirations of working. Those (few) who did not foresee any difficulties in getting work tended to be younger people who lacked experience in trying to obtain a job.

  Aspirations of self-employment were common among the participants in this study, as this was seen to be a way of avoiding the prejudice of potential employers.

  In terms of occupation, some planned to pursue skilled jobs in engineering, IT or the building trade, teaching, professional athletics, catering and support work for deaf children. However, a majority, particularly those who were over 20, tended to aspire to unskilled, low-status work in industry, and it was suggested that there may be a connection between what these young people aspired to and what their teachers and others thought they were 'fit' for.

  "I think it's gonna be difficult. I'm not sure. Being deaf and black will make it difficult, so I'm not certain about it. But I would like a job, you know, I don't want a job cleaning or, you know, rubbish removal. I would like a good job. Perhaps at college or something like that." (Male)

- **Becoming more independent:** For some of the young people in this study, their future career ambitions were closely linked to their aspirations for greater independence. In general, this meant living away from their family, sharing a home with friends, or living on their own. It was not always clear to the young people how they would achieve this, and few of them knew how to go about

getting social housing or where to get information about other types of support that might be available to them.

For several, marriage and having their own families were also important aspirations. Asian women, in particular, saw their future plans in terms of marriage, in line with their families' expectations for them.

"And one day if my parents introduce a man, I don't know, I'll judge for myself, but if my parents force me, I'll leave. I want to organise my life, see to my life first. But hopefully … my dream is to travel and meet the right man and if I save money, I'd pay for it myself – nothing to do with my parents. I think that's fair you know." (Young Asian woman)

In some cases, well-meaning families were seen to act as a barrier to their independence. Some described their parents as "over-protective", or "treating them like a baby".

- **Helping others:** Some of this group highlighted the importance to them (but general lack) of high achieving black disabled people as role models. Many aspired to become role models for other young black disabled people, and to be able to offer informal support and advice to others like themselves.

Housing aspirations – adults with learning disabilities

3.10 Independence was not necessarily something that all disabled people desired or felt confident enough to aspire to. In Bowey & McGlaughlin's study of adults with a learning disability living with elderly carers, the majority (73%) of the participants in the study said they currently had no desire to move elsewhere, but would prefer to remain in their current home. A key finding of this study was that some of the individuals with a learning disability were themselves providing significant care to their carer (in some cases an elderly parent). This resulted in an unwillingness by the adult with a learning disability to plan for the future as they had concerns about how their carer / parent would cope if they moved elsewhere. (This was also a common theme in the evidence gathered on the aspirations of carers – see Section 7.)

3.11 Nevertheless, many in this group knew that they would need to plan for alternative housing and / or support in the future, and the majority had clear preferences about their future housing, which included living in a shared house, or a flat with friends or a partner; living with another relative or sibling; living alone; or being supported to remain in the family home after the death of their parent. However, there was a great deal of anxiety expressed about this. Few had taken any concrete steps towards investigating options and generally found it difficult to talk about specifics. (All quotes from Bowey & McGlauchlin (2005).)

"Mum and Dad don't say anything about the future; they don't talk about it."

"When the time comes, I'll think about it, but I don't know about it yet. The time might come if I have to move, 'cause of since my dad died, but I'm not ready yet. Let's just see what happens."

3.12 There was a desire for greater independence among some of the people with learning disabilities in this study. However, they often lacked confidence in their skills and needed reassurance that they would continue to be supported after the death of their carer.

> "I'd like to live somewhere peaceful, not traffic all the time. I'd like to live on my own. I'd like some support, from my parents, from staff. I'd need support with money, I'm still learning about it, I'd need support with crossing the road. It's a bit hard to think about."

> "I would like to be more independent, but sometimes I'm not confident. I haven't got confidence in me to try new things, I'm not very confident about cooking and things."

3.13 A few participants had made more specific housing plans, and these were able to speak more confidently about the future in general. This group valued having carers who had been involved in the plans and who felt positive about the prospect of them becoming more independent.

> "I've talked to my social worker about it [future plans]. We've been talking about it in a review, my Mum brought it up. She's all for it, 'cause she's seventy-two so in case she goes. I'm all for it. I mentioned it before, we discussed it before but it didn't happen then. So we talked about it in the review so they put my name down on a list for housing and then they found a bungalow. I'm going to be living on my own with some support."

3.14 The authors of this report suggest that social services could more actively support both adults with a learning disability and their carers to begin the process of considering options for the future in order to avoid crisis situations (resulting from the death of an elderly carer).

Housing aspirations – disabled young people

3.15 In her study of the housing aspirations of 30 disabled young people in Scotland, Dean (2003) identified three groups of young people: 10 who had left the parental home; nine who lived with their family but were aspiring to leave; and 11 who lived with their family and were not aspiring to leave.

Young people who had left the parental home

3.16 Among those who had left the parental home, there were three groups: those who left following a crisis, those who left in a planned way for education (students), and those who left in a planned way for other reasons. Although these groups had different housing experiences, they all had similar views about what was important about that housing. Satisfaction was linked to:

- **Location:** A 'good' location was near to people the young person knew (mostly family), where young people felt a sense of belonging, where they felt safe and where there was easy access to the kinds of facilities they wanted to use.

- **Property features** (including accessible design): All the young people in this group (irrespective of whether they were wheelchair users) valued the greater space standards, wet-floor showers and lower kitchen units available in properties designed for wheelchairs.

- **Tenure:** Most of the young people were tenants of social landlords or living in university accommodation, and they felt reassured about having a landlord, who took responsibility for repairs and maintenance of the property.

- **Independence:** Having a household separate from their parents was very important to these young people.

3.17 Although this group were largely happy with their current home, half expected to move in the near future and only two expected never to move. Those who expected to move wanted their future housing to correct the things they were dissatisfied with in their current housing. So those who were concerned about safety wanted to move to a better area. Others wanted a house with a more disabled accessible design.

3.18 Looking further into the future, this group of young people described ideal housing as linked to a more settled lifestyle. This often included hopes of living with a partner and having children. Not all of these young people aspired to own their own homes. Just over half wanted to remain in rented accommodation because they preferred having a landlord who was responsible for the upkeep of the property.

Young people who lived at home, but who aspired to leave

3.19 The second group in Dean's study were generally positive about their current housing. However, their desire to leave the parental home was often related to tensions within family relationships and to how they imagined life away from their parental home.

3.20 For those with a learning difficulty, college courses that focused on nutrition, cooking and money management helped to build confidence and skills, which the young person believed had prepared them for leaving the parental home. There was some gender differences in relation to actual preparations for leaving. In particular, the women discussed the practical aspects of setting up a new home – buying furniture, pots and pans, linen, etc. or being given such items by friends and relatives – whereas the men appeared to have made few preparations.

3.21 This group of young people relied on parents and care professionals to provide information and guidance about future housing options, and this information was, on occasion, misleading. In general, this group of disabled young people were not aware of expert housing advice services.

Young people who were not aspiring to leave the parental home

3.22 For the third group of young people, the desire not to leave their parents' home was not related to satisfaction with their current housing. Rather, it was about

their relationship with their family. The family provided love, company, care and support which the young people thought they would have to do without if they left the parental home. These young people were also conscious of their own important contributions to the household, providing company and practical help to family members.

3.23   Although this group of young people expected to stay in their parents' home for the foreseeable future, only four expected to live there forever. The others expected to move eventually. However, no one had taken steps to investigate options, voiced an aspiration to parents or professionals, or made applications in preparation for a future move. This group of young people did not know that there might be a long wait after applying for a house before a property was offered to them.

How to support the housing aspirations of disabled young people

3.24   Dean pointed out that the findings of this study showed that the housing experiences and aspirations of young disabled people are similar in many ways to those of their non-disabled peers. Most wanted to live away from parents when they were in their twenties. Living away from parents was seen to signify adulthood and to be a sign of independence. However, much more needs to be done to inform and advise disabled young people of the housing options that are available to them.

Summary

- Disabled young people had a wide range of occupational aspirations. Many also planned to take up further and higher education, and / or wanted to become more independent from their parents.
- The aspirations of disabled black young people were sometimes tempered by fears of disability discrimination and / or racism among employers and a lack of information about the advice and support that would be available to them for moving into higher education or work.
- Some differences were found in the aspirations of young people with special educational needs (SEN) depending on whether they attended a mainstream or a special school. Young people with SEN attending mainstream schools were more likely than those attending special schools to say they planned to seek employment after age 16. However, among those who were planning to continue their education, those from mainstream schools aspired to higher level courses. Those from mainstream schools were also more likely to aspire to higher status jobs, living independently from their parents and having families of their own.
- In terms of housing aspirations, not all disabled people (including disabled young people) necessarily desired or felt confident enough in their skills to aspire to greater independence from their families. Those who did, did not always have adequate or accurate information about the options available to them, or about the practical preparations required to live more independently. Greater support and advice is needed for this group, particularly for those who live with elderly parents, relatives or other carers.

4. Older people

4.1 This section looks at the aspirations of older people. The main focus is on the aspirations of older people with high support needs, and / or people with dementia. Four studies were identified:

- Bowers *et al* (2009) aimed to set out a positive and aspirational vision of 'a good life' for older people with high support needs living in care homes. The research included, among other things, a series of discussions with older people, their families and professionals. Eighty-four older people from four geographical areas (three in England and one in Scotland) took part in the study.

- Katz *et al* (2011) carried out a review of the literature on what older people and/or those with high support needs have said that they value. In addition, the research involved conversations with 26 people with high support needs about their lives and what they valued and aspired to. This group was diverse in terms of their gender, ethnicity, geographical location and type of disability or health condition. Most were older, but their ages ranged from 40 to 93. Some lived in care homes or supported accommodation; over half lived in their own homes in the community.

- Williamson (2010) carried out research to develop key quality of life indicators for people with a dementia diagnosis. A particular focus of the research was to collect the views of people with dementia from so-called 'seldom heard' groups, including people from black and minority ethnic groups and people with more severe dementia living in care homes. The research involved a literature review, interviews, focus groups and a postal survey. Forty-four people with dementia participated in the research, including significant numbers from black and minority ethnic communities and people with more severe dementia living in care homes.

- Croucher (2008) conducted eight focus groups with both 'younger' older people (aged 48 to 64) and 'older' old people (aged 65 and over) in England. The aim was to explore the housing choices and aspirations of older people. A total of 49 older people participated in the study.

Facts and figures[10]
- Figures from the 2011 Census indicate that over 65s comprise 16.8 per cent of the Scottish population. The proportion of older people in the Scottish population is currently projected to increase to 25 per cent by 2035.

- As of March 2013, there were 33,000 older people living in care homes in Scotland and 50,000 receiving care at home.

- It is estimated that approximately 88,000 people in Scotland currently have dementia.

---

[10] Audit Scotland (2014) *Reshaping care for older people*.

Older people's voices unheard

4.2   One of the key findings of the study by Bowers *et al* was that the voices of older people who need a lot of support are largely absent from previous research studies focused on this group; in general, other people (professionals, families) speak for them and make decisions for them. Katz *et al* similarly found that the views of older people with high support needs have rarely been sought by researchers or policy-makers. Most of the research on this group has been based on the views of professionals, carers or family members, with older people themselves tending to be seen as too 'hard to reach', or too difficult or unreliable to interview.

4.3   Nevertheless, the studies identified in this review found that people with dementia, including people with more severe dementia, were able to express their views about what is important to them.

Aspirations of older people with high support needs

4.4   Bowers *et al* found that few older people want to be, or actively plan to be in a care home; their move into care usually results from a crisis in their health, or because somebody else persuaded them it would be a good idea.

4.5   Older people generally had very low expectations of their quality of life in a care home, their surroundings and themselves. They also had little choice in significant decisions that affected them. For older people living in care homes, 'choice' is often limited to choice over food / meals, what time you get up, and what time you go to bed.

> "I'm too old to care and it's debatable as to whether they [staff] want my opinion." (Bowers *et al,* Care home resident, Leeds)

> "I had to sell my flat to pay for X care home so now I haven't got any choice – this is my home because it's all I've got left." (Bowers *et al,* Care home resident, Kingston)

4.6   Bowers *et al* obtained detailed feedback from older people about what they considered to be 'a good life'. A number of themes were identified:

- people knowing and caring about you
- the importance of belonging – and relationships and links to local communities
- being able to contribute (to family, social and community life) and being valued for what you do
- being treated as an equal and as an adult
- respect for your routines and commitments
- being able to choose how to spend your time – pursuing interests, dreams and goals – and who you spend your time with
- having and retaining your sense of self, your personal identity – including being able to express views and feelings (self-expression)
- having control over your surroundings – those that are shared and those that are private
- getting out and about.

"It would be great if we could use some of the fee we pay for our own leisure, maybe have someone for two hours each week to do what we want with us – take me out on the bus, sort out my wardrobe." (Bowers *et al*)

"I wish I had the same person so I could get them into my routine... you end up having to fit in with their routines. I pay a lot of money here... I think it should be my routine that's found out and stuck to." (Bowers *et al*)

4.7 Williamson identified very similar priorities for older people in a study about quality of life indicators for older people with dementia. In order of importance, the indicators were:

- Relationships or someone to talk to: This category included family, friendships, and relationships with paid carers.

- Environment: This included physical aspects of the environment such as it being safe and secure as well as aspects such as peace and quiet.

- Physical health: This included good health and physical fitness.

- Sense of humour: This included sharing a laugh with other people.

- Independence: This category included practical issues such as being able to look after oneself and exercise choice as well as the feeling of being independent. However, people were also aware of the risks and responsibilities of having independence.

- Ability to communicate: This category included issues such as being listened to and being understood.

- Sense of personal identity: This category included how the person would describe themselves, their expectations and hopes, for example.

- Ability or opportunity to engage in activities: This category included being able to help out or be busy with activities.

- Ability to practise faith or religion

- Experience of stigma: This included the desire to be treated fairly.

Barriers and enablers

4.8 In discussions with professional stakeholders, Bowers *et al* identified the main barriers to increasing the influence of older people's voices in their own support as:

- the invisibility, isolation and 'societal neglect' of older people with high support needs (ageist assumptions, policies and practices)

- loss of and low self-esteem, confidence and expectations (possibly as a result of the above)

- very low awareness of and understanding about – and possibly lack of support for – independent living for this population of older people

- power differences where other people are deemed to know best and are in charge of key decisions and resources

- lack of knowledge and skills among professional care staff to act and behave differently, and absence of training and support to change.

4.9 Bowers *et al* argued that both cultural and structural changes are necessary to overcome the barriers to hearing older people's voices and supporting their aspirations. A different approach to care is needed. This should begin with an increased focus on personal identity, self-expression and individual aspirations, rights and circumstances. The authors suggested that changes would be needed at three levels:

- At an individual level, people's human rights need to be better understood and applied. Many of the shortcomings of current care are the result of a failure to approach people as individuals with a right to express their needs and preferences.

- At a local level, commissioners and service providers need to engage directly with older people with high support needs and involve them in decision making.

- Changes at national or societal level are probably the most demanding because they necessitate a "fundamental shift … away from a 'professional gift model' to a citizenship model."

4.10 In the literature review conducted by Katz *et al,* information, money, support other people's time, access to transport, equipment and technology were all identified as both barriers and enablers of the lives that people wanted to live.

4.11 Table 4.1, based on a model developed by Katz *et al,* shows the relationships between what older people value and what hinders or helps them to achieve and retain the things they value in their lives.

Table 4.1: What older people with high support needs value

	What older people want, value and aspire to		What hinders or helps
Me	**Social well-being**	Personal relationships Good relationships with carers Social interaction Making a contribution Cultural activities	Information Finances Technology Equipment Transport Other people's time Support
	Physical well-being	Physical health Good environment Physical activity Getting out and about Safety and security	
	Psychological well-being	Self-determination Continuity and adjusting to change Humour and pleasure Sense of self Mental health	

Source: Katz *et al* (2011) *A better life: What people with high support needs value*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation (Based on Figure 2: Post-analysis model, p. 41)

Housing aspirations of older people

4.12 In Croucher's study of the housing choices and aspirations of older people, a discussion about people's future intentions with respect to their housing raised the following issues:

- Older people find it difficult to plan for future uncertainties, but felt confident they could make the necessary adaptations to their existing homes if and when required.
- Some emphasised the importance of considering housing options, and if necessary moving, before it becomes too difficult to cope with the move.
- Those who had recently moved, said they had been determined to move to a place that they wanted to be, rather than be forced to move when they might not have the capacity to make a decision about what was best for them.
- For those who were moving, finding suitable properties either to buy or rent was not always easy.
- Older people were largely supportive of the principle of equity release, especially for people who do not have pensions or family to inherit their homes. Some saw their housing equity as an important source of income in later life. However, there was a general lack of faith in current equity release products. Some (particularly those from the African-Caribbean community) did not trust

equity release products or want to get into debt, and so said they would not use them under any circumstances.

4.13   In terms of future options, some older people (particularly those from the Asian community) wanted better independent advice about the options available. While there was a preference by people to remain in their own homes, the general view was that sheltered housing was a more attractive option than a care home for people who required additional care. Those who were currently living in sheltered housing appreciated the combination of independence and security. Low opinions of care homes were informed by the experiences of visiting people in care homes, but also by negative media reports that highlighted cases of abuse or neglect.

4.14   Most people thought that if they could remain in their own homes, that a bungalow (with minimum two bedrooms) would be the best option because of its accessibility. Good access to local services and transport links were also essential.

4.15   Some of those who had experience of home care expressed concerns about the quality of care, and the sometimes difficult relationships and negotiations that had to take place between carers and the person receiving care, and about the supervision of home carers. There were also comments about the lack of certain types of services (for example, help with small household repairs) that would generally make their lives easier.

Summary
- Older people's aspirations for 'a good life' focused on things that they valued and which they felt would help them to achieve social, physical and psychological well-being.
- Key themes included: people knowing and caring about you; having a sense of belonging to a local community; being able to contribute and being valued for what you do; being treated as an equal and an adult; being given respect for your routines and commitments; being able to choose how to spend your time and who you spend your time with; having and retaining your sense of self; being able to express views and feelings; having control over your surroundings; and getting out and about.
- In terms of housing aspirations, in general, people wanted to remain in their own homes if possible. Sheltered housing was seen to be the preferred option for the future if physical health declined, rather than a care home.
- It was suggested that services for older people with high support needs should place a greater focus on human rights, and involving this group more directly in decision-making.

5. Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) people

5.1 This section discusses the aspirations of LGBT people. Three studies were identified; however, all three of them were narrowly focused on the housing aspirations of older LBGT people.

- Steele A (2010) conducted research on the housing needs and aspirations of older people in Leicestershire. This research also gathered information about the housing aspirations of four marginalised groups, including older LGBT people. The study involved a single focus group with nine older LGBT people. Seven participants were lesbian, one was a gay man and one a transgender person. They ranged in age from 51 to 75.

- Croucher (2008) conducted research on the housing aspirations of older people in several areas in England. This study included a single focus group with eight LGBT people from Manchester, ranging in age from 48-64.

- Walker & Wilkins (2013) conducted focus groups with 40 LGBT people in four areas in the south of England including one rural area. The participants ranged in age from 55-92. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences of housing for older LGBT people and to find ways of improving the services offered to them.

Facts and figures

5.2 No accurate information is available about the number of homosexual, bisexual or transgender people in Scotland. Official estimates of the prevalence of homosexuality in the UK range from 1.5% of the general population (by the Office of National Statistics) to 6% (by the UK Treasury).

Housing aspirations of LGBT people

5.3 The findings from all three studies listed above were almost identical, thus giving weight to the findings of each individual study.

5.4 Interviewees who took part in the study by Steele pointed out that the housing needs of older LGBT people are not significantly different to the needs of heterosexual people. People wanted housing that is appropriate (for example, in relation to size, accessibility of local facilities and geographical location). However, there was an additional need identified for housing to be located within a community which was friendly and accepting of LGBT people.

5.5 In terms of future aspirations, both Steele and Croucher found a clear preference by people to remain living in their own homes, in familiar surroundings and around people they knew. However, it was also recognised that this could be an isolating experience, particularly for individuals with declining health, and so it might not be the best option in every case.

5.6   When people were asked about their preferences if they eventually had to leave their own home because of an increased need for support, Steele found a strong preference for mainstream sheltered housing over residential care. However, the group emphasised that the provision of care and personal support in sheltered housing should be sensitive to their needs as an older person and as a LGBT person and allow them the freedom to express their sexuality.

> "Just moved into sheltered housing and I haven't felt comfortable enough to 'come out' to the other residents yet. In the rules it says 'no discrimination' but I still feel that I will be discriminated against by other residents." (Steele 2010)

5.7   Both Croucher and Walker & Wilkins found anxiety and fear among some individuals about homophobic attitudes, abuse and the possibility of being victimised for being gay should they have to move into sheltered housing or residential care as they got older.

5.8   Similarly, the potential for lack of sensitivity by some care workers and informal carers was seen as one of the main worries of the group in Steele's study, and this concern was corroborated by the experience of one participant in the study by Walker & Wilkins.

> "You have to do a qualification to become a carer but what sort of training are they given in gay, lesbian or transgender awareness? It is most definitely needed." (Steele 2010)

> "I've been bathed like this (participant motioned a long arms reach) … because I'm a lesbian. The carer, she wouldn't come into the bathroom… she didn't want to be in there with me naked." (Walker & Wilkins)

5.9   There was also a question about the possibility of same-sex couples moving to sheltered housing together and whether this would be permissible and 'accepted' by housing providers.

5.10   Both Steele and Walker & Wilkins also explored whether there was a desire for specialist housing provision catering exclusively for older LGBT people. However, in both studies, it was thought that this could further marginalise and segregate LGBT people and result in the residents becoming the target of discrimination of the wider community. It was also pointed out that the LGBT community itself is very diverse and such an arrangement would not necessarily suit everyone.

> "You run the risk of segregating LGBT groups from everyone else, like they are completely different." (Steele 2010)

> "I can see the value of a women-only community but not a lesbian-only community, because you'd be isolated, and everyone in the surrounding area would know that's the place where all the lesbians are." (Walker & Wilkins)

Summary

5.11 There was little information available on the wider aspirations of LGBT people. However, there were three studies that all focused on the future housing aspirations of older LGBT people, and all of these had essentially the same findings.

5.12 Older LGBT people, have a preference for remaining in their own homes for as long as possible. Sheltered housing was seen to be preferable to a care home for those whose health was declining. However, among this group, there was a great deal of anxiety about being victimised for being gay if they had to move into either a sheltered housing complex or a care home. Fears were also expressed about possible lack of sensitivity or homophobia among staff in these types of housing settings.

6. Gypsies and travellers

6.1   Just one study was identified on the aspirations this group. Steele (2010) conducted research on the housing needs and aspirations of older people in Leicestershire. This research also gathered information about the housing aspirations of four marginalised groups, including older gypsies and travellers. The study involved: interviews with five older people who were residents of a travellers' caravan site in Leicestershire; and participation in the Leicestershire County gypsy and traveller forum (15 people).

Facts and figures

- Results from the 2011 census indicate that there are 4,200 gypsies / travellers in Scotland.

- At the last published official count of gypsies / travellers in 2009, there were just over 2,000 people living on Council / Registered Social Landlord (RSL) sites, private sites and unauthorised encampments in Scotland.

Housing aspirations of older gypsies / travellers

6.2   Steele found that older gypsies and travellers expressed a strong dislike for 'bricks & mortar' accommodation. This included sheltered housing or a house / bungalow. Housing was seen as restricting their freedom.

> "A large majority of travellers that move into a house can only cope for about 18 months or so and then they want to move again but then they have to go through applications to get back onto pitches."

> "I was in a house for a year and a half and it killed me, it absolutely killed me."

> "You need to see 360 degrees around you – you can't if you're in a house with four walls."

6.3   The older people who took part in this study acknowledged that age was a barrier to travelling. The point was made that, traditionally, the gypsy and traveller community would look after the older members of their community. However, this was changing, in part due to older people themselves not wanting to be a burden to their family and changes in the gypsy and traveller lifestyle generally.

6.4   At the same time, this group had a desire to remain living within their own community at their current site. Moving away from the site would mean that they would lose contact with their family and social networks, resulting in them feeling more isolated and vulnerable. Their preference was for culturally-appropriate accommodation in the form of extra-care site provision with the following features:

- bungalows or dayroom houses with living space and kitchen facilities and room for up to two caravans for people to sleep in.
- additional electricity 'hook up' points for visiting family

- access to an emergency alarm call system
- on-site support services or easy access to health and social care services.

> "A mobile home or bungalow with a warden or lifeline button might be a good idea. Keeping everyone in the same community – that would be the ideal housing solution for older travellers."

Summary

- Just one study was identified on the aspirations of gypsies and travellers. This focused on the housing aspirations of older people in this community, and highlighted that this group would strongly prefer to be able to maintain certain aspects of their travelling lifestyle.
- In particular, there was a strong dislike for 'bricks and mortar' accommodation. People preferred to remain living within their own communities, at existing caravan sites, but with extra care available for those who needed it.

7. Carers

7.1 This section looks at the aspirations of carers. There is a very large body of literature which explores the experiences of people who provide informal care to another person (usually a partner, parent, sibling or child). Carers may be young or they may be older and they may provide a wide variety of tasks, including:

- **Practical household tasks** such as cooking, cleaning, washing up, ironing, paying bills and financial management.
- **Personal care** such as bathing, dressing, lifting, administering medication and collecting prescriptions.
- **Providing emotional support** such as listening, offering advice and friendship.

7.2 While carers often express personal satisfaction from their role, it is recognised that unpaid caring can also have significant negative impacts on the carer – physically, mentally, socially and economically.

7.3 This is a group for whom it is difficult to differentiate between 'needs' and 'aspirations' in the research literature as the two terms are frequently used interchangeably and simultaneously. Furthermore, carers' 'aspirations' are often explored **not** in terms of their educational, career or housing aspirations, but rather in terms of aspirations for greater independence and control over their own lives. Notwithstanding this, a search of the literature identified the following reports:

- Arksey *et al* (2005) explored the aspirations and decisions related to the work and retirement of carers looking after disabled or sick relatives, friends or older people. The study involved: a review of the literature; interviews with 80 carers; and focus groups with professionals.

- Arksey *et al* (2007) compared the outcomes desired by carers (parents) of disabled children on the one hand, and by carers of disabled and older adults on the other. This study involved a re-analysis of data collected through two previous studies related to these two different groups of carers.

- Dearden C & Becker S (2000) carried out interviews of 60 young people caring for a parent with a long-term illness or disability. The purpose of the study was to explore the extent to which caring influenced young people's decisions and activities in relation to education, training and employment, leaving home and becoming an adult.

- The Centre for Rural Health (2010) carried out a review of published literature on providing dementia services at home in rural and remote areas.

Facts and figures

7.4   Figures from the 2011 census indicate that there are 500,000 carers in Scotland. There is no accurate data on the number of young carers; however, some studies estimate the prevalence of young carers in Scotland to be as high as 100,000.[11]

Carers' decisions around employment and retirement

7.5   Arksey *et al* (2005) found that a range of factors affected carers' thinking and decisions about work, retirement and care-giving. These included:

- finances (household income, mortgage, pension, welfare benefits)
- their own physical and mental health
- personal factors (identity, freedom and independence, commitment to career)
- work-related issues (supportive employers, working hours, flexibility, retirement / redundancy packages)
- availability of other formal or informal support (childcare provision, social work support, charging)
- issues related to the care recipient (commitment to care recipient, care recipients' needs and wishes)
- distances and travelling times to work.

7.6   Generally, no single factor dominated and decisions tended to be the result of a combination of factors.

7.7   In general, parent carers could work **and** care if they could find jobs that fitted in with caring responsibilities. For parents of school-age disabled children, that meant being able to work school hours and term-time only. Barriers to being able to work included: lack of after-school care for disabled children.

Carers in rural areas

7.8   Aksey *et al* (2005) also found that carers in rural areas faced additional barriers to employment as a result of their caring role. For people without a car, getting to work can be a challenge in areas where public transport is limited or non-existent. However, even for those with their own car, if work was not available in the immediate locality, travel times and distances may be barriers to continued employment. It can also be difficult to recruit local paid carers in rural areas – even if direct payments are available to fund this type of support.

7.9   Apart from barriers that carers may face regarding employment, those living in rural areas can find it more difficult than those in urban areas to get advice, help and assistance. Services may be, at best, difficult to access, involving long journeys to day centres or hospitals, and at worse, services may be entirely inaccessible.

---

[11] The Scottish Government publication, *Getting it right for young carers* (2010), defines a young carer as a child or young person under age 18 who provides significant care and support to someone else due to that individual's illness or disability. The lack of accurate census information on young carers is thought to be because the census form is completed by adults who may not perceive their children as 'young carers'.

7.10   The literature review by the Centre for Rural Health similarly found that carers in rural areas may face all of the same difficulties as carers living in urban areas, but that social isolation and poorer services are especially common among rural carers. The evidence suggests that carers living in rural and remote areas have access to fewer services, and consequently also have less choice.

7.11   This review noted that there is little evidence available about the issues that particularly affect rural carers. However, it pointed out that the charity Carers UK recommends a number of good practice responses to address the needs (if not aspirations) of rural carers. These include: wider respite opportunities, transport solutions and using local media to raise awareness of services. Interventions focused on reducing social isolation, combining social opportunities with education, and using the telephone to provide information, support and education are all seen to be important.

Outcomes desired by carers in their contacts with social care services

7.12   Arksey *et al* (2007) identified a number of similarities in the outcomes that carers desired in their contacts with social care services – irrespective of whether they were carers of disabled children or carers of disabled or older adults. These were:

- a life / identity of their own, over and above their role as parents / carers
- having control over their life
- spending 'quality' time with the person receiving support, apart from the time spent in providing care
- maintaining physical and emotional well-being
- having adequate resources
- feeling skilled and informed
- maintaining family life
- having positive relations with professionals.

7.13   An additional priority for parents of disabled children was that they wanted siblings to be able to make a positive adjustment to having a disabled brother or sister. That is, parents wanted their other children to lead ordinary lives and to enjoy everyday childhood experiences. They also wanted to see a positive relationship between the disabled child and her / her non-disabled siblings.

7.14   An additional priority for carers of disabled adults and older people (particularly the former), was to be able to adjust to and manage change – for example, including giving up paid work; disruptions to home life, friendships and leisure activities; changes in their roles and responsibilities; and changes in relationships, particularly marital relationships.

7.15   Carers of disabled adults also wanted to receive value for money in services – particularly where charges were being made for certain services.

7.16   These findings may be set against the results of a survey carried out by a partnership of national charities in Scotland that explored the impact that caring

has on people's lives.[12] Based on responses from 150 carers in Scotland, the partnership found several barriers for carers in achieving the outcomes they desire from the contact with social services:

- 77 per cent of carers were not prepared for all aspects of caring
- 83 per cent of carers were not aware of the support available
- 35 per cent of carers had received wrong advice about the support available to them.

Barriers for young carers in achieving independence

7.17 Dearden & Becker explored the transitions of 60 young carers to adulthood, examining the issues that affected their decisions about education, training and employment. The focus was not specifically on young carers ambitions, but more on the barriers to their ambitions. Key findings were that:

- Educational problems were common among this group. Many of the young people failed to attain any educational qualifications as a result of frequent non-attendance at school. This, combined with their ongoing caring responsibilities, effectively excluded these young carers from the labour market.

- Leaving home was problematic, particularly if the young person had a parent who required considerable help and support. As a result, some delayed moving out of the parental home. (A similar finding was reported by Bowey & McGlaughlin regarding adults with learning disabilities living with elderly carers, discussed in Section 3.)

- Where a parent had a long-term mental illness, some young carers left home in an unplanned way at a crisis point, and some of these were taken into care.

- Young carers often had considerable practical skills, and career and job choices were sometimes influenced by the skills gained through caring. However, their moves towards greater independence were restricted by lack of educational qualifications, as well as limited social and employment opportunities.

- Many families with young carers received little or no social care services. Where services were provided they were sometimes felt to be inappropriate, intrusive, or too costly. At the same time, there was little evidence of any services that supported disabled adults in their parenting role.

Summary

- Carers have to consider a range of factors when deciding about whether to try to combine paid work with their (unpaid) caring responsibilities. These included: finances; flexibility of employers; working hours; availability of other formal or informal supports; the care recipient's needs and wishes; and distances and times travelled to work.

---

[12] Carers UK (2013) *Prepared to care? Exploring the impact of caring on people's lives.* Cited in Audit Scotland report, *Reshaping care for older people*.

- Carers in rural areas faced additional barriers to employment. These were poor public transport, travel times and distances, and lack of availability of local paid carers and support services. Social isolation is also an issue for rural carers. Better supports for rural carers could include wider respite opportunities, transport solutions, interventions to reduce social isolation, combining social opportunities with education, and using the telephone to provide information, support and education.
- Outcomes desired by carers in their contact with social care services included (among other things): having a life and identity of their own (apart from their role as a carer); having control over their life; maintaining their physical and emotional well-being; and having adequate resources; and feeling skilled and informed.
- For young carers, frequent non-attendance at school can result in a failure to attain any educational qualifications. This then has implications for the young person's ability to find work in the future and ultimately to achieve independence. Where services are provided in these situations, they are sometimes felt to be inappropriate, intrusive or too costly.

8. Single parents

8.1   This section discusses the aspirations of single parents.

8.2   One report – on the employment aspirations of single parents – was identified (Gingerbread, 2012). The purpose of the study was to explore single parents' experiences of, motivations to, and aspirations for work, and to identify practical measures that would improve employment opportunities for single parents. The study took place in London, Manchester and Cardiff and involved a literature review and a survey, interviews and focus groups among single parents.

Facts and figures[13]

- One in four families in the UK with dependent children is headed by a single parent.
- The median age of single parents is 38.1.
- Single parent families are twice as likely to live in poverty as two parent families.
- Three-quarters of single parents work on a part-time basis.
- The median weekly income for working single parent families doing 16 hours a week or more is £337, compared with £491 for couple families with one worker and £700 where both parents work.
- Only two-fifths (38 per cent) of single parents receive maintenance from their child's other parent. For all those with an agreement for child maintenance (both through the CSA and private arrangement) the median weekly amount received is £46 per family.

Employment aspirations of single parents

8.3   The main finding of this study was that, although single parents were not a homogenous group, they shared one overriding aspiration for their work– which was to be able to achieve the right balance for them and their family between working and parenting.

8.4   The 'right balance' varied depending on a range of individual factors, such as:

- educational qualifications
- current and previous employment experience
- age and number of children
- length of time spent as a single parent.

8.5   High qualified (degree level or above) single parents were more likely to be in paid work, to be working full-time, to be in higher paid jobs, to have stronger employment experiences in the past five years, and – if they were not currently in work – they were more likely to aspire to get back to work within the next year.

---

[13] See Gingerbread website: http://www.gingerbread.org.uk/content/365/Statistics

8.6   In contrast, single parents with lower qualifications were more likely to be caring for a disabled child or relative, in education or training or looking for work, to be in part-time employment if they were in work, and to be working in lower paid roles. Single parents with lower qualifications were also more likely to have not worked at all in the last five years.

8.7   In this context, single parents' aspirations were a reflection of their own experiences and expectations of the labour market. Thus, among high qualified single parents in higher paid jobs, aspirations were more likely to focus on a wish for suitable childcare provision (which they could afford), flexible hours and approaches from their employers (which were more common in these types of jobs), and opportunities for personal challenge and to develop their careers.

8.8   On the other hand, lower qualified single parents were more likely to want work which fitted around school hours (as they could afford little, if any, childcare), fixed part-time hours (as flexibility from employers for emergencies was less common in low-paid jobs), and specific training opportunities in order to progress (as there was little expectation of natural progression or development).

8.9   Although different single parents prioritised their choices about work differently, almost all identified their practical aspirations for work first – that is, the details about how the job would work in practice, and which made it possible (or not) to take up or continue in employment. These practical issues included: (All quotes from Gingerbread (2012).)

- **Hours of work:** As noted above, flexible hours and / or part-time working were important for different people.

    "Flexibility with hours is most important. If they give me that, I give them 100 per cent." (Single parent with higher qualifications)

    "21 hours a week means I can drop him at school and means I can pick him up – which are important things for me personally." (Single parent, not working)

- **Emergency time off:** This was particularly important for single parents with younger children.

    "You do just need to be able to take time off at a moment's notice. I've turned up at nursery with my daughter a few times and they've refused to have her because she had something wrong with her." (Single parent, working)

- **Travel time:** This issue was especially significant for single parents living in rural areas where work was likely to involve significant travel time, often to the nearest town or city.

    "I am extremely limited in childcare provision in my area with no family to help out so I will find getting another job very difficult as I have to get my son to and from school." (Single parent, rural area)

- **Availability of affordable child care:** Many single parents have to weigh up whether it is worth working at all once they take into account the extra costs of childcare.

  "I would always have worked if I could have done so without operating at a loss after paying for childcare"

  "Childcare's really expensive. There's all these Sure Start centres but they're just as expensive as nursery. What I'm paying for nursery – even with working tax credits – is still a fortune. I couldn't do it without that."

- **Accessibility of child care:** Again, this was particularly an issue for single parents in rural areas where many services didn't stay open after 5pm and closed during school holidays. However, this was also an issue for people who worked shifts, and for people with children in their early teens, or a disabled child.

  "In my area there is a big shortage of childminders so even though I have looked for several months now, I cannot find anyone to take my son to school and I don't have any family to help me out. I will have to try to change my job so that my son can go to school, as my company will not either reduce my hours (from 42 to 37) or change my hours, to allow me to juggle both work and school."

  "Most nurseries are shut after 6pm and don't open before 8am. No good if you work shift patterns, which in today's increasingly 24/7 society, is fast becoming the norm in many professions."

  "We get blamed for having ASBO kids but we get blamed if we don't work too. Who's supposed to look after our kids? There's nowhere for them to go after school except hang out with their mates and I'm not home until 7."

  "My little boy's severely autistic and getting anyone to take him, who I feel really understands how to look after him, was a nightmare. He goes to a special school but he needs meeting when he gets home and looking after, someone to get his tea. It costs me a fortune to have this special lady come in."

8.10 The practical issues of working hours and child care were the priorities for all single parents. However, once these issues were addressed, then other work-related aspirations could also be discussed. The main issues that were commonly raised by single parents were:

- **The general lack of higher level jobs with flexible working patterns:** In relation to this, single parents' aspirations were limited mainly by the fact that senior-level jobs were – or were perceived to be – incompatible with their care-giving role. Many single parents were unwilling to compromise time with their children for the longer hours and higher levels of stress that were associated with higher level jobs.

"I have now opted to work on a very low salary for the council just because they agreed to give me flexible hours and don't make me feel like a burden every time I have to take time off for my children."

"Until my husband left, I had a well-paid managerial position, [but] now I struggle as a lone parent trying to juggle work around school hours. Although my employer is supportive I have had to take a low paid part-time job which doesn't use any of my skills in order to put my son first. No managerial position would allow me to work part-time or home work."

"I am too qualified for my current position, but due to the lack of flexibility in my career and no access to childcare, I am unable to work in a higher paid job and still give my son a stable home life."

- The **significant role that managers and colleagues had** in either supporting or thwarting their ability to balance their work and home life effectively. Single parents commented that having an understanding manager was often the key to making it possible to combine work and life as a single parent. Conversely, unsympathetic employers and colleagues could make work difficult, or even impossible, for them. Single parents sometimes perceived a prejudice against those working part-time or flexibly – which meant they were considered less valuable to the company and not suitable for promotion or development opportunities.

"I had a senior job which became untenable as a single parent, as colleagues and bosses put me under a lot of pressure to put work first which was clearly not possible."

"When you go for a job obviously no one knows your circumstances, but within two to three days of starting my employment, people ask 'where's your husband?' Then I got called into the manager's office when he found out that I was a single parent and he asked how I was going to do the job."

Summary
- The aspirations of single parents were closely associated with their educational qualifications and previous work experience.
- Practical considerations (regarding working hours and the cost and accessibility of childcare) tend to outweigh all other work-related aspirations for single parents. These practical issues may either act as barriers or facilitators for a single parent wishing to take up work.
- Beyond the practical considerations, single parents' work-related aspirations may be thwarted by a lack of suitable (flexible) higher-level jobs. In addition, supportive (or unsupportive) managers and colleagues can often make the difference for single parents in being able to balance work and childcare responsibilities.

9. Night workers

9.1 This section focuses on the aspirations of night workers.

9.2 Two studies were identified, and these largely focused on the experiences, preferences and difficulties people had in relation to night working, rather than on their aspirations per se. However, both also included some discussion of the aspirations of people who worked nights, and how night working either supported or hindered those aspirations.

- Richbell & Chan (2011) carried out secondary analysis of the data collected on night workers through the UK Labour Force Survey. They also gathered additional (new) data of a sample of 70 permanent night workers in a single large supermarket in a suburban area of Sheffield. The majority of respondents to the second survey were female employees working on part-time contracts. (Note that this sample is quite different to the general profile of night workers across the UK, described below.)

- Norman (2011) used an ethnographic methodology to observe the experiences of 50 night workers in London. These included police officers, street cleaners, shop fitters, cleaners, lorry drivers, security guards, carers, ambulance staff, shopkeepers and taxi drivers.

9.3 In addition to these two studies which were focused specifically on the experiences of night workers, a third study, Wills (2007), looked at the skills, experiences and aspirations of a group of contract cleaners in a large office building in Canary Wharf. The study involved the analysis of anonymised company records for 105 cleaning staff and interviews with 54 of these individuals. This sample included 32 night staff, and the findings of this study as they relate to these individuals are included here also.

Facts and figures

9.4 Published UK Government statistics[14] indicate that:

- Some 322,000 employees in the UK are permanent night workers.

- Most of these work in four sectors: public admin, education and health; manufacturing; distribution, hotels and restaurants; and transport and communication.

- The typical permanent night worker is a male employee on a full-time contract. Approximately two-thirds of permanent night workers are male, and among male night-workers, 92 per cent are on full-time contracts. Approximately half of female night workers are on part-time contracts.

- Various studies have shown that night working or shift work results in increased health risks (including breast cancer, prostate cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma,

---

[14] See Norman (2011).

cardio-vascular disease, gastrointestinal disorders and pregnancy problems), a substantially increased risk of work-related accidents, and an increased risk of road traffic accidents when travelling to or from work.

- The majority of the UK's night workforce is white (86%), but this is a significantly lower proportion than in the overall workforce (92% white). Conversely, there are proportionately more people from black and minority ethnic backgrounds working at night, compared to the overall UK workforce.

9.5 In Norman's study, he observed that a large proportion of night workers were recently arrived migrants or refugees in poorly paid jobs. Night workers who were white and British tended to have higher paid, professional jobs.

"Marko and Anka are standing on the tube tracks kitting up with transparent plastic bags, torches, rucksacks and mechanical grabbers. They walk the London Underground tunnels every night collecting litter. Tonight they are scheduled to walk between Kings Cross and Edgware Road. On average they collect about three large sacks of rubbish each. Both Marko and Anka are Bulgarian. Marko has been doing the job for three years and Anka only six months. "I do it because I need the money, only for the money." Marko said. "When I started this I didn't think I'd still be doing it in three years' time. I need the money. What else can I do?"" (Norman, 2011)

The preference for night working

9.6 Richbell & Chan found that night workers in the supermarket were a self-selecting group. That is, they had not been **told** to work at night; they had actively chosen to do so. For them, night working was preferred because it helped them to achieve a good work-life balance. In particular, it helped to facilitate child care arrangements as it released the employee (usually the mother) during the day. Another reason for preferring night working was that it paid better than day working. (However, in his study of London cleaners, Wills found that not all night workers were paid extra for the anti-social hours that they worked.)

9.7 The study by Wills corroborated Richbell & Chan's finding that night workers were generally self-selecting. Wills also found that many of the night-working cleaners in London chose to work at night because this arrangement allowed them to look after their children while their partner worked during the day. One of the interviewees in this study said that she began working nights after her second child was born, and she could no longer afford to pay for childcare.

9.8 There were also some work-related benefits from night working. Altogether, 90 per cent of the supermarket night workers enjoyed working nights, and there was evidence of a 'camaraderie' or team spirit among the permanent night staff. Over 80 per cent described their working relationships with other employees as excellent or very good.

9.9 Norman also found that those who worked nights enjoyed the freedom and control that this gave them over their work – primarily because the managers / bosses only worked during the day.

The problems with night working

9.10 In the study by Norman, the question of whether night work was beneficial or not for child care arrangements was a topic of strong disagreement among the night workers he observed. For a large number of night workers, the fact that their working hours mirrored their partners' made it easier to share childcare. However, this was not the case for everyone. For some, night work made organising child care far more difficult:

> "The childcare costs a fucking fortune on nights: eleven grand last year. My missus works early and so we need a nanny in the morning because I can't get back by 7am. Some people say nights makes child care easier, but it doesn't." (Male night worker with two children aged 6 and 10; Norman, 2011)

9.11 However, in this study, there was consensus that working at night was detrimental to the **quality** of the time and the **energy** people had when spending time with their families and children.

> "I felt like I was missing so much of the kids growing up due to the job. You're never there during the day; even if you're doing nights you're trying to get over the last one, or prepare for the next. With shift work time goes so quickly and you're always out of sync with everyone else." (Paramedic; Norman, 2011)

9.12 Others complained that the lack of sleep and general fatigue made them irritable which ultimately had a detrimental effect on family relationships. Others said they had no social life at all.

> "Erkan has been working in this shop for two years, but has been "in this business" for ten years. "That's what you do if you are from my country (Northern Cyprus). If you can't speak good English and you are in Britain then all you can do is this. Kebabs and takeaway." I ask Erkan about the night shifts, "People don't understand what it is like. You get stupid people, crazy ones. 'Give me chips,' they shout. Then they want hamburger sauce and don't want to pay for it. They come in for change. 'Sorry, we don't have any,' I say and they start swearing and everything. When they are drunk, they are terrible. You get all the drunks at night." … Erkan reflects on his work, "I don't want to carry on. I get tired and stressed and it affects my health. I'd never do this work again. You're like a robot: come in; go home; I don't go to the pub; I don't see my friends. I spend what time I can with my kids, but then I'm tired and in a bad mood. No, it's not good for you. People need to understand that."" (Norman, 2011)

9.13 While Richbell & Chan found a general preference for night working among those in their study, they also found that there were aspects of night work that were less

positive. The work was not seen as mentally difficult; however, over half of those they surveyed said that the work was physically demanding and dull.

9.14 Norman found that while people often valued the freedom that night working gave them to get on with jobs without close supervision or excessive management, they also complained that they were not adequately supported. A frequent complaint made by night shift workers was that their needs were not sufficiently understood or taken into account by their managers or their day-time colleagues.

9.15 The satisfaction with night working may also depend on the **length** of the night shifts:

> "I do 12-hour shifts and don't have a life outside work. I just can't do stuff in the day. I'm all dazed. It's not safe, I don't feel safe to drive or treat a patient at 4am. On an eight-hour shift I could cope. These 12-hour shifts, I can't do them. They [the new 12 hour shift pattern] were introduced here in January. Management love it. We only have one change over. For us eight hours [shifts] were much better." (Ambulance driver; Norman, 2011)

Summary

- There was some evidence that people who work nights often do so out of choice – because such a working arrangement helps them to balance work with child care and other family commitments. Some also appreciate the greater sense of freedom and control that they have in working nights.
- However, there was also evidence that night workers are often poorly paid and that their health and family and social relationships suffer as a result of their night working.

10. Refugees and asylum seekers

10.1 This chapter discusses the aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers. Much of the research on refugees and asylum seekers is in the context of research to support integration. Thus the focus has predominantly been on the employment (or career), educational and housing aspirations of these groups.

10.2 Six studies were identified. Two of these focused on specific sub-groups of refugees: people who were teachers in their countries of origin, and people wanting to set up their own businesses in the UK.

- Mulvey (2013) was a three-year longitudinal study that sought to understand the process of integration of Scottish asylum seekers and refugees. The study involved surveys, interviews and workshops (focus groups) and data was collected in two waves, with a survey and interviews at the beginning of the study and a follow-up survey and interviews with the same individuals towards the end. In the first wave, 262 questionnaire responses were received and 40 interviews carried out. In the second wave, there was a low response to the survey, but 34 follow-up interviews were carried out. The study gathered information about employment, housing, education, health and community involvement.

- Charlaff *et al* (2004) was a Scottish Government-funded audit of the skills, qualifications and aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers living in Scotland. The study aimed to explore the educational experiences and qualifications of refugees and asylum seekers; their work experience both in their countries of origin and in the UK; their language skills and their needs and aspirations for the future. The study involved a survey using a semi-structured questionnaire. Interpreters were made available to participants to assist with completion of the questionnaire. In total, 523 questionnaires were completed.

- Angier *et al* (2004) carried out research among refugees in the north east of London who wanted to start up their own businesses. The study involved, among other things, interviews with 22 refugees. The purpose of the research was to try to identify ways of removing barriers to refugees starting their own enterprises.

- Clarke (2008) carried out interviews with 123 refugee teachers in London. A semi-structured questionnaire was used to gather information about the qualifications and experience of refugee teachers, their achievements in the UK, their aspirations for future career development and what support they needed to achieve their aspirations.

- Refugee Resource (2002) carried out a survey of the skills and aspirations of 95 refugees and asylum seekers in the Oxford area. The purpose was to find out what the barriers are for refugees in obtaining employment, and to identify interventions that could help them achieve their aspirations.

- The Refugee Housing Project North East (2002) sought to identify the needs and aspirations of refugees in the north east of England in relation to "move on"

accommodation, and to find out how to ensure that any future second stage housing provision is successful. The study involved interviews with people from 42 asylum seeker households, (totalling 101 people in all) in their language of choice.

Facts and figures

10.3   In the UK, a refugee is defined as someone whose application for asylum has been accepted by the government. They have been recognised as needing protection under the 1951 UN Refugee Convention. The term asylum seeker refers to a person whom the government has not yet recognised as a refugee under the 1951 Convention. The UK government has ruled that people seeking asylum are not permitted to work. Thus, these individuals must rely on state support while their applications are considered.

10.4   In 2012, there were around 2,000 applications for asylum from individuals living in Scotland. There is no information available about the number of asylum applications that were granted from people living in Scotland. However, in the same year, across the whole of the UK, 32% of applications were granted. Of those that were initially rejected, around a quarter were subsequently granted upon appeal.[15] In 2012, the languages most commonly spoken by asylum applicants in Scotland were Farsi (22%), Arabic (21%) and English (16%).[16]

Employment / career aspirations

10.5   All of the studies that explored the employment or career aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers found a very strong desire to work. Charlaff *et al* found this to be the main aspiration among the refugees and asylum seekers who participated in the study: to receive a positive decision on their asylum application and to access appropriate employment and training so that they could begin to contribute to Scottish society. Many respondents specifically said they wanted to work so that they could pay taxes, national insurance, stop living on benefits and become more integrated into Scottish society. Mulvey similarly found that refugees often identified employment as the key to their successful integration, and a way of reducing social isolation.

> "When you are allowed to work then you'll be able to move, meet people, have friends, you know. At times you will be happy, you find that you have someone to turn to, someone to talk to." (Mulvey, 2013, interviewee E58)

10.6   However, all studies found very low levels of employment, including among those who had been granted refugee ILR status (ILR: indefinite leave to remain) and who had been resident in the UK for several years. See Box 10.1 below. This was despite a strong desire to work and often very highly skilled employment histories in their countries of origin. In addition, among the relatively few who had found work, most were working in very part-time, low skilled, poorly paid jobs on fixed-term or

---

[15] www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/assets/0000/6115/SRC_The_Facts_Booklet.pdf. UK Home Office statistics on asylum applications do not separately report figures from Scotland.
[16] http://www.scottishrefugeecouncil.org.uk/media/facts_and_figures/asylum_applications_uk_figures

zero-hours contracts. Mulvey found that, among refugees who were not working, nearly three-quarters hoped to start employment within two years, but fewer than a third thought this aspiration would be realised, and most had given up on the possibility of using their existing skills.

Box 10.1: Prevalence of UK employment among refugees and asylum seekers

In Mulvey (2013), a survey of 262 refugees in Scotland found just under 21% were in any form of paid employment.

In Charlaff *et al* (2004), a survey of 523 refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland found just 5.7% in employment.

In Refugee Resource (2002), a survey of 95 refugees in Oxford found that 71% were unemployed.

In Clarke (2008), a survey of 123 refugees who were teachers in their country of origin found that 57% were unemployed, and only 5% were employed as teachers.

10.7   All of the studies found that an inability to access employment often extended well beyond the period in which people were not allowed to work. Refugees highlighted a link between not having the right to work during the asylum process and subsequent low levels of employment.

> "We are not allowed to work. This is the bad thing for us. For they give me status after eight years. It means during these eight years… it means like you did nothing and you lost your age also . . . for a lot of people when you were in your thirties is the time when you're starting to build your career, so for you, you weren't allowed to start a career." (Mulvey 2013, interviewee E752)

10.8   The result of this enforced worklessness during the asylum period was that people became deskilled and had large gaps in their employment history. Refugees frequently identified these issues as barriers to obtaining employment once they were eventually permitted to work.

10.9   Charlaff *et al* found a particularly strong desire among doctors and teachers to use their skills in Scotland, but these groups were unable to do so for various reasons, including lack of permission to work, lack of UK qualifications, and English language proficiency.

> "I am happy in Scotland. But I am annoyed because I don't do anything - all I do is read and read in English to try to be able to talk to people here. Here I have few friends and nothing to do. I used to work 12 hours a day in a hospital." *(Charlaff* et al *(2004), male asylum seeker, Guinea)*

10.10 Clarke reported similar findings from a study of refugee teachers in London. Among this group, 72% had formal teaching qualifications from their countries of origin, but only 7% had gained a teaching qualification in the UK, and only 5% were

currently employed as teachers. However, two-thirds of the sample (67%) said they would like to be registered on a database of teachers that would provide access to further information and advice about opportunities in education – indicating a continuing aspiration to work in the field.

Barriers for refugees and asylum seekers in accessing employment

10.11 Across all the studies, the following were identified as barriers to refugees accessing employment or becoming self-employed:

- **English language skills:** Many refugees could not pursue their aspirations for employment until they had improved their English language skills. However, long waiting lists made it difficult for many to access English language training, and all studies suggested that there was a lack of advanced English language classes for people wanting to pursue professional careers.

- **Not having permission to work:** As noted above, even for those who had relatively quick decisions on their asylum applications, a period of enforced unemployment was seen to result in deskilling and a large gap in an individual's work history, which made it very difficult to find work once the person was permitted to work.

- **Lack of UK work experience and work references:** Refugees perceived that their lack of experience of work in the UK counted against them when making job applications.

- **Employment discrimination:** In some cases, this was perceived to be related to age:

  "I am a 49 year old foreign man whose first language is not English. They can be really hesitant to hire people like me, you know what I'm saying? If you were an employer, would you hire an old man like me rather than a young Scottish native people?" (Mulvey 2013, interviewee E541)

  A similar finding was reported by refugee teachers in London – 17% of this sample were over 50.

  Others simply thought that employers preferred to hire British people.

- **Financial constraints:** Many refugees could not afford to access the necessary (additional) training or education they needed to achieve their aspirations. This will be discussed further below under the section on educational aspirations.

10.12 Angier *et al* also identified additional barriers for refugees wanting to start up their own businesses in the UK. These included:

- **Lack of understanding of UK business culture:** In addition to the barrier mentioned above related to language, the next most significant barrier for prospective entrepreneurs was related to their lack of understanding of the way business is done in the UK. For many refugees, the business culture in the UK is more formal and regulated than they had previously experienced in their

countries of origin (where commitments are often made verbally). Regulatory requirements and form-filling, combined with lack of confidence in written and spoken English, were significant barriers.

However, Angier *et al* noted that refugees are not a homogenous group, and not all would necessarily struggle with the level of regulation that exists in the UK.

- **Lack of information about support available to start-ups:** The majority of interviewees seemed unaware of Business Link or other sources of publicly funded business advice. Positive experiences of working with support agencies seemed to be the result of meeting helpful individuals, rather than the result of 'refugee friendly' policies and systems at the agency.

What would help in overcoming the barriers to accessing employment?

10.13 The various studies included in this review identified a range of interventions that could help to overcome the barriers for refugees in accessing employment.

- English language courses, including higher-level and / or specialist courses

- Help and advice in finding appropriate training courses, jobs or (voluntary) work placements

- Further training / education to improve skills and qualifications

- Help in completing application forms

- Advice and support in preparing for professional exams, developing a business plan, etc.

- Information about how "the system" works in the UK – for example, teachers need information about how to become qualified as a teacher in the UK, the roles of different educational establishments, etc. This need for information relates not only to prospective teachers, but to other professions and those wanting to set up businesses as well.

- For those wanting to start their own businesses, the support of mentors – whether identified through formal arrangements via enterprise agencies or informal arrangements from within the refugee's circle of friends and contacts – was seen as especially helpful.

Educational aspirations

10.14 Charlaff *et al* found that over a third of respondents to the refugee skills audit identified a need for further training to improve their employment prospects. Further training included university study and training in IT and computing skills. Some respondents identified specific training needs in order to gain locally recognised qualifications in areas including medicine and engineering or in trades such as plumbing, electrical contracting, etc.

10.15 Mulvey also found a strong desire for further education among refugees, despite the feeling by some that further education would simply delay their move into a

paid job. However, a number of barriers to further training / education were identified:

- **Finances:** The reality for many was that they simply could not afford to attend college or university. Some had experience of being accepted onto educational courses, and starting their studies, but then having to withdraw to find work.

  "Personally for me just with the finance… because you get the bursary and you have to pay everything. You don't get nothing for survive, so I decided now just to finish this year the NQ, then after I go and find a job, work for some time, and then I come back to finish my studies."

- **Childcare:** This was particularly an issue for women who could be prevented from taking up educational opportunities if they had no family nearby to help with childcare arrangements.

- **Proof of educational level:** Many people had difficulties getting their existing qualifications recognised by UK educational establishments. In other cases, people had left their own homes suddenly to flee conflict, and had arrived in the UK without any proof of their existing qualifications.

10.16 As discussed above in relation to refugee's employment aspirations, access to English language courses is crucial for this group. In their audit of refugee skills and aspirations, Charlaff *et al* found that only a very small number of respondents declared that they could not speak English at all (4%). However, almost half the respondents (approximately 46%) indicated that they could speak "a little bit" of English. Respondents were more likely to say they had a level of fluency in reading and writing in English than they were to say they had fluency in speaking English.

10.17 The majority (72%) of refugees in the audit by Charlaff *et al* had attended some English language training since their arrival in Scotland, and these generally reported positive experiences. English language courses were seen to provide opportunities for meeting other people and making friends. In addition, there was also an appreciation of the support provided by teachers.

  "It helps us if we go shopping, and to shops, and just everyday life. And also in my voluntary job. I speak to people every day who are from here. Yes, and it's thanks to these lessons because when I arrived here I didn't understand a word. When I arrive here, I was lost."

However, there were sometimes barriers, similar to those described above for people wanting to access English language courses. While the main reason reported in Charlaff *et al* for people **not** accessing English language courses was that their English language skills were already very good, others mentioned lack of information, long waiting lists, problems with childcare or transportation, and health problems as having prevented their access.

Housing aspirations

10.18 Mulvey found that just over half of refugees and asylum seekers said they were either satisfied or very satisfied with the houses they were currently living in. Satisfaction was lower among women than among men, and still lower among women with children. However, there appeared to be some confusion in this study about the concepts of housing and community. As a result, some people said they were unhappy with their homes, but liked the area they lived in, and so they responded that they were satisfied with their housing and intended to stay in their current house.

10.19 The reasons given by those who wanted to leave their current house included: the (poor) physical characteristics and conditions of the house and the (too-small) size of the property. Health reasons were also cited (particularly) by women, as a reason for wanting to move.

10.20 It appeared to be common for those in the Mulvey study to have moved house frequently since their arrival in the UK. Around half said they lived in their present home for under a year, and even among those who arrived in the UK five years earlier, over 40% said they lived in their current house for less than a year.

10.21 While the interviewees in the Mulvey study generally said they would like to own their own houses, this was seen to be impossible for most because of the difficulties in saving sufficient money for a deposit. Thus of the apparent choices available to them, most aspired to stable social housing.

10.22 In a survey carried out by Refugee Housing Project North East (England), most respondents (81%) said they would like to continue living in the North East of England after being granted refugee status. However, their preferred areas for housing in the North East were areas other than those into which they had initially been placed – largely for reasons of personal safety and to be able to avoid racial harassment. In this study, refugees' preferred type of housing was self-contained, not shared homes, in safe neighbourhoods. As in the Mulvey study, the majority expressed an interest in owning their own homes.

Summary

- All the studies that explored the employment or career aspirations of refugees and asylum seekers found a very strong desire to work. However, all studies also found very low levels of employment, despite very highly skilled employment histories in their countries of origin. Those who were in work were most often working in very part-time, poorly paid jobs on fixed terms contracts. Few were using their skills in their current work.
- Barriers to work were identified as inadequate English language skills, not having permission to work (during the period of enforced unemployment while an asylum application was being considered), lack of UK work experience and references, employment discrimination and an inability to afford the necessary training / education.

- For refugees wanting to start their own businesses, a lack of understanding of UK business culture, and a lack of information about how to start up a company were also barriers.
- For refugees who aspired to further / higher education, childcare issues and an inability to provide proof of their existing educational qualifications were further barriers.
- In terms of housing aspirations, factors such as the physical characteristics (including size) and conditions of the property were often cited as reasons for wanting to move house. Personal safety and the ability to avoid racial harassment were also important in relation to choosing a home. Preferred housing was self-contained (not flats) in safe neighbourhoods.
- Many refugees aspired to owning their own homes, but did not believe this could be possible because of the difficulties of saving sufficient money for a deposit. Thus, of the choices that appeared to be available to them, most expressed a preference for stable social housing.

11. Migrant workers

11.1 This section discusses the aspirations of migrant workers. Four studies were identified, including two based in Scotland:

- De Lima *et al* (2007) undertook a study of migrant workers in Grampian. The purpose of the research was to inform the planning of local services for this group. The study included interviews or focus groups with 87 migrant workers.

- Tribal Consulting (2008) carried out research for Glasgow Housing Association (GHA) to assess the future housing needs of migrant workers in Glasgow and the likely impact on GHA. The study involved (among other things) focus groups with GHA tenants and housing applicants from A8 countries. While this study did not directly focus on the housing aspirations of migrant workers, it did nevertheless provide some information (albeit limited) on what migrant workers considered to be satisfactory and unsatisfactory about their current housing arrangements.

- Green *et al* (2008) undertook research on migrant workers and their impact on the regional economy and labour market in the southeast of England. The study included a survey of 726 migrant workers from seven areas across the region and focus groups with migrant workers. The study sought to obtain a profile of migrant workers in this part of England, to identify the range of skills they offer and to assess their impact on the local economy. It included an exploration of the motivations, aspirations and intentions of migrant workers.

- Schneider & Holman (2009) carried out a three-year longitudinal study among migrant workers in the east of England. The study sought to ascertain the factors that influence decisions about coming to, and length of stay in, the UK; barriers to full participation in the regional economy; barriers to integrating into the local community; and how these change over time. Among other things, the study gathered information about migrant workers' goals and aspirations.

11.2 A fifth study, Mai (2011), explored the experiences of migrant workers in the UK sex industry. The findings of this report are discussed in Section 12.

Facts and figures

- In 2004, eight countries joined the European Union through Accession. These were Poland, Slovakia, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania and Slovenia (referred to as the A8 countries). Rights conferred on citizens from these countries generally included free movement across the EU and this has resulted in a significant level of in-migration to the UK and Scotland.
- The A2 countries, Bulgaria and Romania, joined the EU in January 2007.
- Between 2004 and 2012 the non-UK born population of Scotland increased from 204,000 to 375,000.[17] People born in Poland constitute the largest non-UK born group in Scotland (56,000 in 2012).

---

[17] http://www.migrationobservatory.ox.ac.uk/sites/files/migobs/Briefing%20-%20migrants%20in%20Scotland%20overview_0.pdf

What migrant workers like and dislike about their current housing

11.3 Tribal Consulting found that most migrant workers in Glasgow obtained housing in the private rented sector when they first arrived in the city. Current GHA tenants from the A8 countries said that their main consideration in applying for a GHA tenancy was the affordability of the rents when compared to the private rented sector. Another reason related to the security offered through the concierge service in multi-storey accommodation.

11.4 Other interviewees reported wanting to move out of shared accommodation in the private rented sector into a home of their own. All the focus group participants currently living in privately rented accommodation reported that their living circumstances involved sharing with at least one other separate household.

11.5 Although the GHA tenants appeared relatively satisfied with their current accommodation, some did express dissatisfaction with the service provided by GHA, property standards or neighbourhood problems. The following issues were mentioned:

- Lack of choice in terms of the location of properties offered to tenants
- Lack of knowledge of neighbourhoods to make informed decisions
- The quality of accommodation
- Repairs service too slow
- Lack of clarity over the rent payments system
- Financial difficulties with furnishing flats
- Inability to access foreign TV channels (i.e. Polish) due to the lack of satellite capability in multi-storey properties.
- Difficulties in dealing with utilities, Council Tax, etc. (although outwith the direct control of GHA)
- Neighbourhood issues ranging from vandalism to harassment and crime.

11.6 Current GHA housing applicants also felt that their housing decisions with regard to GHA stock are hindered by their lack of knowledge and the lack of information made available to them. In particular, people felt frustrated that they did not know the level of demand for GHA properties across the city and they did not understand how the allocations system worked.

Migrants in the UK labour market

11.7 Results from the Grampian study (de Lima *et al*, 2007) and the South East England Migrant Worker Survey (Green *et al*, 2008) suggested that the motivations of migrant workers in coming to the UK are overwhelmingly economic. Most survey respondents (around 90%) indicated that their main reason for coming to the UK was to work and earn money.

11.8 Other reasons for migration included: to learn English, to see and experience another country, to visit/ join friends and family members and to study.

> "Money is the main reason, the situation in Poland is not so good...many people can't get jobs. There are so many adverts in the local newspapers that Scotland needs us, so I think to myself I can come here and earn more money." (de Lima *et al*, 2007)

> "I had just finished my study and I was struggling to find a job, any job actually, it was very difficult at the time and it was at the same time when my husband lost his job. So we decided we are going to try something different. It was a good idea because my friend from college, she lives here for a few years and she suggested when you come you can have some place to stay. So we decided to come." (Green *et al,* 2008)

> "I want to live life on my own and get some work experience internationally...it's exciting to be living and working abroad." (de Lima *et al*, 2007)

11.9   Both studies also found that migrants were often uncertain about their length of stay in the UK. In the South East England study, before they arrived in the UK, a quarter of respondents said they did not have plans for how long they would stay. Interestingly, this uncertainty about length of stay seemed to increase once they had been in the UK for a number of years. However, those with children established in schools in England appeared to be more likely to stay.

> "I'm 26. I've lived in the UK since 2003, so it's five years next week. I came here on a trip actually, so I came for like five days trip with my mates. We just said 'why not try to get a job'. We had to work illegally for the first year - as a builder, a gardener and a chef. I lived for three and a half years in London. ... I don't know plan for the future. I am thinking of going somewhere else, like Canada or Australia." (Green *et al,* 2008)

> "I have got children here, and they are happy going to school here. It's a different school system in Poland and if they go to Poland I think my children will be one of the working class. I realise they must stay here." (Green *et al,* 2008)

11.10 Similarly, in the Grampian study, the majority of those involved in the study (approximately 60 participants) were unsure of their future intentions with regard to remaining in Grampian or indeed the UK. They all expressed a wish to return to their country as they had only ever intended to stay in Scotland until they maximised their earnings, before returning home to be reunited with their families. They reported that the length of time they were likely to remain in the UK would depend on a variety of factors, including employment prospects in the UK and family / relationship ties back home. A small minority reported that they did not like living in Scotland and felt that the quality of life was much better in their home country (e.g. better housing and social life).

11.11 For those who expressed a desire to remain in Scotland in the long term, aspirations about a 'better quality of life' and a preference for the natural environment (e.g. access to mountains/the scenery) were important

considerations. Other 'quality of life' issues – for example, possibilities of obtaining work commensurate with their qualifications and good quality housing – were also important factors in people's intentions to stay.

11.12 In the South East England study, when migrant workers were asked to indicate which of various options best described what they hoped would happen in the future:

- 51% said they wanted to get a better job in the UK
- 22% wanted to go back and work in their home country
- 7% wanted to get a job that uses their skills and training
- 5% wanted to become self-employed
- 2% wanted to work in a third country
- 12% made other comments – with several in this category stating that they were 'happy as they are' or 'don't know'.

11.13 When this group were asked to rank how satisfied they were with the way things had worked out since coming to the UK, there were high levels of satisfaction, with 75% of respondents saying that they were either 'very satisfied' or 'quite satisfied'. Most of the remainder reported that they were neither satisfied nor dissatisfied, while the minority of respondents who were unemployed / between jobs were more likely to be dissatisfied. Satisfaction levels were particularly high amongst the self-employed.

11.14 When asked to give their reasons for being satisfied, the most frequently cited reasons related to economic well-being and quality of life:

- well paid job / good pay (identified by 23% of quite satisfied/ very satisfied respondents)
- all is going well / very settled here / I like it here (20%)
- good quality of life (18%).

11.15 Across the sample as a whole the main reasons cited for dissatisfaction were that respondents had poor English / were not good at English, that they needed a job / a better job or that they were homesick.

11.16 In the Grampian study, the majority of migrant workers tended to engage in social activities which involved other migrant workers and reported limited opportunities for socialising with local communities due to language difficulties, different cultural norms / expectations, the predominance of the 'drink culture' across Grampian, lack of time, and the need to save their earnings. There were also some reports of physical harassment. In addition, the lack of affordable and quality housing was an issue raised by migrants in the Grampian study.

Career and educational aspirations

11.17 Schneider & Holman found that migrant workers in their east of England study generally did not have fixed plans in terms of their length of stay when they first arrived in the country. Moreover, actual length of stay did not necessarily indicate

a greater ability and fluency in English language; instead, the key factors were availability and flexibility of language classes, opportunities to mix with other English speakers and 'personal' motivations.

11.18 Most lived in private rented accommodation and had had several changes of address within a short period of time after arriving in the UK. Migrants often expressed disappointment with the quality and availability of housing in the UK.

11.19 In terms of career, the majority of interviewees initially took up employment in the UK that required lower skills and qualification levels than required by jobs they had in their home countries. However, some interviewees had taken up educational opportunities in the UK (or distance learning) and were studying while working. Apart from English language classes, interviewees were studying in further education colleges on IT and Access courses, and for degrees in the higher education sector, and, in one case, for a PhD.

11.20 Those not engaged in formal education were either planning to: progress in their current workplace; set up their own business; or take up educational opportunities at a later date. There were also those who were content to settle with low-skilled work (usually because of an intended short stay in the UK or consciously opting for 'a simple life with no worries').

11.21 This study also found that people's goals changed over time. For example, when people first arrived in the UK, their main aspirations related to finding a job, improving their English and taking up education. In the medium-term, goals related to saving or increasing savings, improving career prospects and promotion – which again sometimes involved further education. In the long-term, the ambition was to stay in the UK.

Summary

- The primary motivation for migrants in coming to the UK / Scotland was an economic one – people came to work and earn money, and when they first arrived in the county, most intended to return to their home countries after a period of time. Other reasons included: to learn English, to see and experience another country, to visit / join friends and family, and to study.
- Factors that influence people's intentions to stay in the UK are related to: the ability to find appropriate work (jobs that use their skills and training), and family connections back home.
- All the studies identified difficulties with migrants being able to obtain safe, good quality, affordable accommodation. Most had the experience of living in private rented accommodation and had several changes of address in a short period of time after arriving in the UK.
- Migrants would find it helpful to be able to receive information about the availability of social rented accommodation, and how the allocations system works.

12. Sex workers

12.1   This section presents information about the aspirations – and needs – of sex workers. The evidence comes from four studies:

- DrugScope & AVA (2013) carried out a rapid evidence review and interviews with 19 sex workers in two geographical areas in England to identify the barriers for sex workers in accessing drug and alcohol services. The study also sought to identify effective interventions to improve access to services among this group.

- Reeve *et al* (2009) carried out a survey of 30 sex workers and in-depth interviews with 18 sex workers in Stoke-on-Trent. The aim of the study was to explore the housing needs of street sex workers.

- Mai (2011) carried out in-depth interviews with 100 sex workers as part of a study on the experiences of migrant workers in the UK sex industry. The study involved migrants working in all sectors of the sex industry (67 women, 24 men, 9 transgender). Interviewees originally came from countries in South America, Eastern Europe, Western Europe and South East Asia.

- Rickard (2001) carried out research involving five adult prostitutes in London. The sample included four women and one man all aged 30-40. The aim was to explore their history of work, aspirations and their plans for the future. A life history methodology was used and data was collected using a curriculum vitae-style template. Each CV presented data in one of 10 categories: personal details, education / qualifications, previous employment, interests / activities, current job, thoughts on retirement from sex work, hopes and ambitions, financial plans, thoughts on getting older and fantasy futures.

12.2   It is important to note that all of the interviewees in the Rickard study and nearly all of those in the Mai study were voluntarily working in the sex industry, and therefore, these findings are unlikely to reflect the views of individuals who are trafficked or forced into prostitution.

12.3   It is also worth noting that the issue of drug misuse was scarcely mentioned in either of these two studies. This is in contrast to other studies which have reported a very high prevalence of drug misuse among prostitutes (Bournemouth ADSUF 2012; Davis 2004; Reeve *et al* 2009). The study by DrugScope & AVA and Reeve *et al* are more about the health and housing-related needs of sex workers, rather than about their aspirations. However, some information about aspirations is included in both studies. Moreover, it is presumed that those sex workers who would wish to access substance misuse services or housing services have an aspiration to get help with some aspect of their substance use, and to live a more settled life. Therefore the inclusion of these two studies which identify the ways of helping them achieve these aspirations are appropriate in the context of this review.

12.4   The findings described in Section 13 of this report, regarding the aspirations of problem drug users, are also relevant in relation to sex workers who misuse drugs.

Facts and figures

12.5   There is no accurate information about the number of people working in the sex industry in the UK. What information is available tends to be based on arrests or prosecutions which are dependent on varying local policing policies and priorities.

12.6   One study has estimated the number of sex workers in the UK as 80,000, one-quarter of whom are migrant workers.[18] There has been a growing concern about the link between prostitution and human trafficking in the UK.

Improving access to drug and alcohol treatment for sex workers

12.7   In their review of the literature, DrugScope & AVA identified four broad types of needs among sex workers:

- Basic physical needs (for example, food, clothing, sanitary products, shelter)
- Mental/emotional needs (such as friendship, counselling, protection from domestic violence)
- Health care needs (for example, drug treatment, reproductive care, HIV/STI care; general medical care)
- Longer term needs (mailing address, national insurance number, housing, employment).

12.8   Drug use and the need to fund a drug habit were identified by the interviewees in this study as the main reason for getting involved in prostitution. Therefore, helping women to address their drug problem is crucial in helping them move out of prostitution when they are ready to do so.

12.9   Children were often central to interviewees' aspirations for a better life; and they were often a key driver for help-seeking. On the other hand, the fear of having their children taken away sometimes acted as a barrier to help-seeking, and losing their children could result in a sense of hopelessness and a perception that it is pointless to make the effort to change.

12.10 When asked how they would like their lives to be in the future, the women in this study often responded with the word 'normal'. The idea of moving (geographically), and having a fresh start were also often raised. However, the most common hopes were to be a good parent and to be substance-free, both of which were each mentioned by over half the women interviewed. Many also mentioned wanting a job and a nice house or home.

> "I'd love to be clean (that is, drug-free). I'd like to have a job but I've got no qualifications. I'd like to provide a nice house for my son. Holidays. You know, he's missed out on basic things other kids have. You know, I'd like to take him abroad. We've only had weekends and a few days in a caravan. So yeah. Things like that. Things that people would say is normal everyday lives."

---

[18] http://people.exeter.ac.uk/watupman/undergrad/aac/scale.htm

12.11 This study found that women involved in prostitution faced a range of barriers to accessing support services to address their needs. Organisational barriers included: lack of flexibility in some services; issues in relationships with keyworkers, including stigmatising attitudes and disparities in gender and age; an absence of support for wider issues, including housing and employment; and a lack of ongoing support and aftercare following drug treatment.

12.12 Effective interventions included: increasing service availability through evening opening hours, mobile outreach services and childcare provision; women-only provision; support from peers; taking a non-judgmental approach to service provision; enhancing or tailoring programmes to make them more specific to the needs of this group; and offering more integrated support that helps women to address the very wide range of needs that they have.

Housing needs of street sex workers

12.13 In their study of the housing needs of street sex workers in Stoke-on-Trent, Reeve *et al* also (like the study above) found that drug dependency was the main reason that the women entered street sex work. Nearly all those participating in the research said that they first started working as a sex worker to fund a drug habit, or to help fund the drug habit of a partner.

12.14 Experiences of homelessness (often multiple experiences) were common among this group of women. Furthermore, a lack of stable housing made it impossible to address a drug problem once an individual was ready to do so. Some of the women in this study resorted to criminal activity as they knew this would give them a spell in prison where they could access treatment services.

> "And then I ended up getting arrested from shoplifting and I begged 'em to send me to jail to get off heroin and that."

12.15 Reeve *et al* identified the following barriers for street sex workers in accessing housing support services:

- limited capacity or motivation to resolve housing and other problems among women with multiple and complex needs
- limited knowledge about the assistance available or how to access it
- a perception that social housing is not a viable option for sex workers, arising from assumptions that drug users, sex workers and/or people with criminal convictions are not eligible for social housing
- limited confidence or willingness to approach the local authority for housing, particularly among those who had surrendered or been evicted from council tenancies previously (for example while in prison, or as a result of anti-social behaviour), or who had previously experienced poor treatment from front line staff
- reluctance to use mixed sex temporary (hostel) accommodation, particularly among those who had experienced violence from men

- the rules and formalities of mainstream housing (hostels for example tend to impose a night time curfew which precludes women from sex working)
- long waiting lists, delays and limited contact from service providers regarding progress with applications and referrals.

Future plans and aspirations of sex workers

12.16 In Rickard's study of the lives of five sex workers she found that the participants had previously held a wide range of (mainly) unskilled jobs outside of the sex industry, often moving in and out of sex work. Some had also undertaken adult education or further education courses, and one had a degree in nursing.

12.17 In terms of their future aspirations, some in this group spoke of living a quiet life without major responsibilities, doing things that they enjoy and taking pleasure in their families and homes (all quotes from Rickard, 2001):

> "At the moment, I want to get out of England and live on a beach for the rest of my life … be a beach bum… I'm quite looking forward to getting older. I want to experience most of the things that life's got to offer, and that, sort of, that includes getting old one day. Sitting in a rocking chair with loads of grand-kids round me."

> "I've got plans for doing the house up and everything and I will do that…. In the next six years, I want to be… money in the bank, all the house done and then I can go out [to work] when I want to… When I think, 'Oh God, I've got a bill,' and I've really got to go out and I think, 'Oh, I wish I was like the normal person where they do the tea, do the dishes and they can sit down and watch what they want.'"

> "I would like to get another little workshop, where I can make things. Because I haven't got one at the moment. I enjoy, you know, making things basically…."

> "I just want to be able to pay my mortgage every month, which I do…. my son grow up getting his good education."

12.18 Two individuals had work-related aspirations outside of the sex industry:

> "In the future I would like to open my own beauty parlour, offering alternative medicine and massage as well. I've already got the equipment."

> "I want to get involved with something new that involves using my brains."

12.19 However, another wanted to continue working in the sex industry, partly because of the earning potential he believed he had, and partly because he enjoyed it:

> "I know I'm at the beginning of my earning curve. I've got about another 10 years. I don't think I'd like to give up work. I do enjoy it. Everybody has to work I think. I think it's a good thing to work, and when you don't work… you know you must really. I imagine you'd lose a lot of your self-esteem."

12.20 When asked about their 'fantasy futures', three of the five prostitutes in this study said they hoped to win the Lottery – which they saw as providing their "ticket out of here" and giving them financial security. One fantasised about earning a comfortable income by giving after dinner talks about her life as a prostitute. It was also common for this group to say that they wanted to do something useful for others in the future – for example, supporting other women or speaking up for those working as prostitutes:

> "I'd buy a big country house and I'd have it for women that want to get away from their old man, like a battered wives thing, and maybe a holiday home for kids that's never seen the countryside or anything like that…. And maybe fight the prostitution cause…"

> "I am going to be the voice for the many thousands of women who would like to say something but are too scared."

Aspirations of migrant workers in the sex industry

12.21 In Mai's study of migrant workers in the sex industry, he found that most of those who took part in the study initially came to the UK because of their aspirations for personal and professional development, particularly in relation to education, which they felt could not be achieved if they stayed in their home countries. After arriving in the UK, they remained and worked as undocumented migrants. Most had not worked in the sex industry before coming to the UK, and only decided to do so after working in numerous other jobs which were eventually seen as less rewarding – both financially and in terms of working conditions. The majority were introduced to the idea of working in the sex industry through friends and colleagues they met in other settings.

12.22 Almost all the participants in the study felt that the benefits of their involvement in the sex industry were the possibility of earning considerably more money than they otherwise could, the availability of time and the possibility of meeting interesting people and travelling. Most interviewees emphasised that by working in the sex industry they had better working and living conditions than those they had encountered in other sectors of employment (mainly in the hospitality and care sectors), and that sex work provided a way to avoid the unrewarding and often exploitative conditions they had experienced in other jobs. Moreover, the income that they earned helped them to support their families back in their home countries.

12.23 The stigma associated with sex work was the main problem for almost all interviewees. It had negative implications for their professional and private lives, and was the primary cause of violence against sex workers from a minority of clients. All interviewees thought that decriminalising sex work and the people involved in it would make it easier for migrants to become and remain documented in the UK, would improve their living and working conditions, and enable them to exercise their rights more fully.

Summary

- The evidence gathered on the aspirations of sex workers presents a mixed picture of people's reasons for initially getting involved in sex work – for some, it was to support a drug habit, and for others (particularly migrant sex workers) it was seen as a way of making more money than they could in other jobs in the hospitality or care sectors. For this latter group, sex work was seen as a way of helping them to achieve aspirations for personal and / or career development.

- Those who got involved in sex work as a result of drug addiction reported a desire to get off drugs, be good parents and live normal lives with a job and a nice house. However, there were multiple barriers to these aspirations, including: a lack of capacity and motivation to seek help; a lack of flexibility in services when help is sought; difficult relationships with service providers; lack of 'joined-up' care to address multiple needs; lack of ongoing support; and lack of information about services.

13. Problem drug users

13.1 This section considers the aspirations of problem drug users. Much of the literature on the topic of problem drug use focuses on the evaluation of treatment and / or rehabilitation interventions and services. Therefore, what little research is available on the aspirations of problem drugs users is within this context – that is, people who present to treatment services are asked about their goals and aspirations.

13.2 In recent years, there has been an increasing emphasis on the concept of 'recovery' from problem drug use. And while the notion of recovery frequently includes within it the need for treatment, treatment is very much seen as a stage in the process rather than a goal in itself. For example, recovery is sometimes contrasted with the expectation that an individual will be maintained on an opiate substitute for a long period of time.

13.3 The findings in this section are based on two reports published by the Scottish Drugs Forum – the first focused on people who had injected drugs in the previous five years and the second looked at the experiences of older drug users:

- Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) *et al* (2013) used a structured life story interview method to record and understand the lives of problem drug users and the place that drug use had in their lives. One of the key objectives of the study was to identify positive pathways away from problem drug use and good practices in relation to this. The study involved interviews with 55 people in towns and rural villages of Scotland (38 men and 17 women) who had injected drugs in the previous five years. The interviews were carried out by people who were themselves recovering drug users.

- Shaw & Smith (2010) reported on the Scottish findings of a wider European study on senior drug users. The study sought to explore the experiences and perceptions of older drug users, and to better understand their current and future health and social care needs and service requirements. Interviews were carried out with 23 drug users (16 men and 7 women) aged 35 and older who were attending community support services in Edinburgh and Glasgow. The interviews focused on drug use, living arrangements and social networks, current health status and treatment, and thoughts about future needs.

13.4 The lack of research on aspirations among drug users who are **not** in treatment is probably explained by the difficulties of accessing these individuals for research purposes (although some may be accessed through criminal justice and prison services). In addition, there is evidence to suggest that those who are drug dependent struggle to set and achieve longer-term goals because their lives are often very chaotic and out of control, focused on the daily need to find and pay for drugs.

Facts and figures[19]

- In 2011/12, 11,380 individuals in Scotland received a specialist assessment of their drug use care needs, which equates to a rate of 230 per 100,000 of the Scottish population. This compares with a rate of 238 (11,696) reported in 2010/11.

- Of those reporting illicit drug use in the last month (7,875 individuals), 55 per cent reported using heroin. This is a drop from 63 per cent in 2010/11.

- Of those under the age of 25 who reported illicit drug use in the last month, 34 per cent reported using heroin. This is a drop from 44 per cent reported in 2010/11.

- The age profile of individuals being assessed for their drug use care needs has changed over the last six years. In 2006/07, 51 per cent of individuals were aged 30 and over. In 2011/12 this figure was 62 per cent.

Aspirations of recovering drug users

13.5 The main aspiration for problem drug users who present to treatment services is to move **away** from a dangerous and chaotic lifestyle **towards** a drug-free lifestyle. However, the attainment of this aspiration is not simply about the cessation of drug use. For many problem drug users, the aspiration of recovery includes a wide range of other aspirations, including those related to family, study, work and housing.

13.6 SDF *et al* found that, for drug users in recovery, their plans and aspirations were:

- continuing recovery – for example, by coming off methadone completely, through continuing treatment or by attending Narcotics Anonymous meetings

- establishing a normal, stable domestic life that included their own house, relationships with their children, better relationships with other family members and some form of job to provide economic stability

- seeking pleasure and contentment from personal relationships and the small things in life

- finding a meaningful occupation (paid or voluntary) that would allow them to "put something back". The most common desire was to get more education and go into counselling or drugs work of some kind.

13.7 Shaw & Smith found similar aspirations in their study of older drug users in Edinburgh and Glasgow. When older drug users were asked about their aspirations for the next 5 – 10 years, the majority hoped to be in employment. It was also common for people to say that they would like to be able to use their own experiences to go into some type of addiction work, or to work in the care sector though not necessarily in the drugs field. Other aspirations were:

---

[19] ISD: Scottish Drug Misuse Database: Overview of individuals assessed in 2011/12.

- having a stable home environment
- entering some form of education or training
- becoming drug free
- being reconciled with family members (this was particularly important for those who were currently estranged from their children).

13.8 In addition to their practical aspirations, some older drug users also spoke about their social aspirations such as their hopes of finding a partner to share their life with, and their hopes to be "contented" and "happy", and living a "normal" life.

> "I would just like to get a job and all that and just be like a normal person, but certain months of the year take a break, take a holiday and that. Just like to be living like the same mundane existence that eight-tenths of the population are living." (Shaw & Smith)

> "I want just a life that I can be normal and just have the nice things you know like a house, a job, a bit of money and my family." (Shaw & Smith)

13.9 These aspirations echo those of sex workers as described in the previous section.

Barriers to recovery

13.10 Just as both studies identified similar aspirations among their interviewees, they also identified similar barriers to recovery.

- **Sexual partners or (former) friends who also use drugs:** Older drug users highlighted drug using friends, acquaintances, sexual partners, or even certain geographical areas as barriers to their recovery.

- **Living in unstable housing (such as a hostel or B&B situation):** This is particularly a problem when other drug users are staying in the same place.

- **Difficulties in accessing treatment, rehab or psychological therapies:** While the accessibility of services has improved in recent years in Scotland, many drug users reported significant difficulties in obtaining a methadone prescription, or getting a place in rehab.

- **Continued illicit drug use:** In both studies, drug users had experience of using heroin in addition to their methadone prescription. However, they recognised that this practice was ultimately preventing their recovery.

What helps drug users to recover?

13.11 SDF *et al* found that recovery often only occurred after years of problem drug use, which typically had involved many of the following: negative life events; housing problems; poverty; violence; serious health problems; imprisonment; estrangement from family; difficulties with care or custody of, or access to, children.

13.12 In some cases, what drove them to recovery was a realisation that they did not want to die and if they continued to use drugs, they would die. At the same time, other drug users described equally serious difficulties that had not led to recovery and sometimes had led to increased drug use.

13.13 Some of the things that drug users identified as supporting their recovery included:

- **Residential rehabilitation**: Some saw rehab programmes as very important in the process of recovery. Rehab services have a number of common features: in addition to the residential aspect, there are rules about behaviour in the residence, and if and when it is acceptable to leave the premises. Intensive psychological / counselling support is provided, usually both one-to-one and in group work. In addition, the environment is geared towards supporting positive change. Rehab provides a break from lives that are chaotic and drug-focused, and gives people an opportunity to reflect on their lives in a safe place – to begin to deal with issues of trauma or mental ill health. However, it is not unusual for people to need more than one try at rehab before they can succeed.

- **Prescribed methadone**: In both studies, drug users saw methadone as an essential component of the recovery process as it provides some stability and structure in their lives as well as reducing the daily need to fund an illegal heroin habit. However, people also felt that to achieve the aspiration of becoming drug free, it is also important to be able to eventually come off methadone.

- **Positive relationships:** In SDF *et al,* positive relationships were identified as the **main** thing that helped people to change. Learning / being equipped to cope with negative thoughts, events and feelings without drugs was an important part of recovery. The support of other people, including children and parents, was key to this. In some cases, rehab provided the opportunity to foster more positive relationships. However, key workers / case workers in community services, a new partner (who had not used drugs but who was understanding about drug use), a family member, or even a friend could also provide the support a person needed.

  "So probably it would be two, three year ago selling Big Issue on the street, met a wee woman, she started being nice to me, being decent to me. She must be about sixty, seventy, so she is older. She is about the age of my mum or something and we just became friendly. She would buy me a coffee and talk to me or something like that and I would tell her all my problems and what not and using her to offload on, she would listen to me. I started praying, I don't know particularly why, wee shot of religion when I was younger. I started praying again. And she said if I wanted to go to church with her that would be fine. So I went to church with her and just met a whole different crowd of people." (SDF, 2013)

- **Self-help organisations and support groups:** Some drug users found 12-step Narcotics Anonymous groups helpful, and these were sometimes used in conjunction with other forms of treatment, or with residential rehab.

- **Access to psychological therapies:** Learning to deal with thoughts and feelings, particularly negative ones, without being intoxicated was seen to be a key factor in supporting recovery. To do this, drug users need access to psychological therapies – either during rehab or through community treatment services.

- **Stable housing:** Stable housing arrangements were highlighted by Shaw & Smith as crucial for people seeking to recover from problem drug use. In addition, it is important for people not to be housed in areas where they have previously used drugs or where there are high levels of drug use in the neighbourhood.

  "Love it, aye! It [a secure tenancy] has given me that bit of stability back in my life which I need. Although I had been living in a temporary furnished flat for a couple of year before I got that one, it was still not my own tenancy. You didn't have the same – it didn't have nothing in writing saying this is yours… you didn't have the peace of mind basically, you know." (Shaw & Smith)

- **Employment and training:** Shaw & Smith suggested that employment while still using drugs can be a way of reducing or controlling drug use, improving social networks and reducing isolation. It also provides a helpful structure for people's lives. However, the process of obtaining employment is often complicated for drug users by previous criminal convictions and the reluctance of some employers to engage with, and offer employment to drug users.

  "Yeah, I think it's better when I'm working. You don't seem to take as much drugs and stuff as well. Even got like a routine where you got to get up and got to work, and not like trying to run around to get drugs and stuff." (Shaw & Smith)

13.14 Many of these same things were highlighted in Shaw & Smith's study of older drug users. When asked what changes in their lives would help to initiate or support being drug free, older drug users said:

- being in some form of education or employment
- reducing off a methadone prescription
- having coping strategies and some form of structure in their lives.

Summary

- The research on the aspirations of problem drug users focused on their aspirations for recovery. In relation to this, their plans and aspirations were: continuing recovery; establishing a normal, stable domestic life; seeking pleasure and contentment from personal relationships and the small things in life; and finding a meaningful occupation that would allow them to 'put something back'. The most common desire was to get more education and go into counselling or drugs work of some kind.

- Barriers to recovery included: sexual partners or (former) friends who also use drugs; living in unstable housing; difficulties in accessing treatment, rehab or psychological therapies; and continued illicit drug use.

- The things that help drug users to recover were reported to be: residential rehab; prescribed methadone; positive relationships; self-help and support groups; access to psychological therapies; stable housing; and employment and training.

14. Offenders and ex-offenders

14.1   This section discusses the aspirations of offenders and people recently released from prison. Three relevant reports were identified, all of which were based in England and were produced by the organisation, User Voice. All involved direct consultation with people in prison. User Voice makes the point that consulting with prisoners has widely been regarded as "morally questionable and politically dangerous" and thus the voices of offenders are seldom heard in the development of services intended to meet their needs.

14.2   The focus of these three reports was on improving the transition between prison and community and reducing re-offending. None of the consultations specifically sought information about offenders' aspirations; however, the issue of aspirations was often raised during discussions about how to improve services and prevent re-offending.

* User Voice (2011a) *(Serving them right?)* is a report of a consultation among offenders leaving prison. Those who took part in the consultation had to have experience of one or more of the following: mental health problems, homelessness or having served in the armed forces. The main aim of the study was to get the perspectives of offenders from the armed forces and those with multiple complex needs about their experiences of obtaining and sustaining suitable housing and employment after leaving prison. The consultation involved 21 male prisoners who took part in two workshops held at HM Prison Kirkham in Lancashire. Half of the participants were ex-service personnel and the other half were not. (In the remainder of this section, this will be referred to as the Kirkham group.)

* User Voice (2011b) (*Learning and skills in prison*) is a report of a consultation among male offenders at HM Prison Channings Wood. The aim was to get offenders' views on the provision of learning and skills in prison. The consultation was carried out through a series of workshops organised and run by ex-offenders. The report does not provide information about the number of offenders who took part in the workshops, but states that the participants included a range of ages and ethnicities. (In the remainder of this section, this will be referred to as the Channings Wood group.)

* User Voice (2011c) (*Reducing youth crime*) is a report of a national (England and Wales) consultation with young offenders aged 10-21. The consultation took the form of a survey of 740 young offenders and 36 focus groups involving 175 young offenders. The purpose of this consultation was to find out (among other things) what young people identified as triggering their offending behaviour, and what they thought would help them to avoid getting in trouble in the future. (In the remainder of this section, this will be referred to as the Young Offender group.)

Fact and figures[20]

- After the slight dip in 2010-11, the prison population in Scotland increased by 4 per cent to an annual daily average of 8,178 for 2011-12. During 2011-12, the young offender sentenced population in Scotland showed a marked drop of 8 per cent from the previous year to 556.

- Over the past nine years there has been an overall decline in the one year reconviction frequency rate. In 2002-03 the one year reconviction frequency rate was 63.9 reconvictions for every 100 offenders, whereas in 2010-11 it was 50.2; a 21 per cent reduction of nearly 14 reconvictions for every 100 offenders in Scotland.

- In the 2011 Prisoner's Survey, carried out by the Scottish Prison Service, over one quarter of those who took part in the survey (28 per cent) indicated that during their up-bringing they had been in care at some point and one fifth (20 per cent) had been in care at the age of sixteen.[21]

- Just under half of prisoners (44 per cent) reported being under the influence of drugs at the time of their offence and 39 per cent stated their drug use was a problem for them on the outside.

- Almost half of those surveyed had attended a learning centre whilst in prison. Six in ten had studied IT and just under a half had studied Literacy and Numeracy (47 per cent) and Art (41 per cent). One third of prisoners had accessed services while in prison in order to help them upon their release. Two thirds of this group had sought advice in relation to housing (64 per cent), one quarter in relation to employment (28 per cent) and one fifth in relation to training (19 per cent).

Aspirations of offenders

Training / education

14.3   The Channings Wood group emphasised that many offenders are keen to use their time in prison constructively to improve their skills and qualifications.

> "We have the time and the motivation and the desire to learn. I don't think there are many inmates who don't want to better themselves." (Channings Wood group)

> "I couldn't read or write very well when I got here. I went into education. Now I have a Level 2 and found out that I can do it. I'm writing stories for the prison magazine now." (Channings Wood group)

Employment

14.4   More than half of the young offenders said that they wanted what they described as "a good life", involving some or all of the following: a good job, a happy family

---

[20] Scottish Government, Crime and Justice Statistics:
http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Topics/Statistics/Browse/Crime-Justice
[21] http://www.sps.gov.uk/Publications/Publication-3696.aspx

life with a partner and children, a nice home, a car and a money. A further fifth singled out a good career (examples given included being a plumber, carpenter or electrician, or having their own business). Others aspired to money and wealth, and some wanted to be footballers, go to university or college, or join the army. The young offenders also identified having a job or career as one of the things that would deter them from future offending.

14.5 The talents and abilities that the young people perceived themselves to have included being good at sports (52 per cent), having practical / vocational skills (23 per cent), and having creative skills (17 per cent). Some of the young offenders said they felt they had the life experience to make a good support worker for young offenders, but they thought that criminal checks were a barrier to employment in this area.

Housing

14.6 Safe and secure housing upon release from prison was an important aspiration for ex-offenders in the Kirkham group. As with drug users seeking recovery (discussed in Section 13 above), not all ex-offenders want to move back into the community they lived in before being in prison. Some want to relocate in order to distance themselves from previous habits, family or friends.

> "I just want a fresh start and my own place." (Kirkham group)

Barriers to ex-offenders' aspirations

14.7 Barriers for people in achieving their aspirations for training / education in prison and their aspiration for work and housing upon release were identified as:

- **Having a criminal record:** Young offenders identified this as the main barrier for them in achieving their ambitions. Having a criminal record made it difficult to get the job they wanted. This was echoed by the Channings Wood group:

  > "You can do course after course in here, but when you leave you still have a criminal record." (Channings Wood group)

  > "I do it [crime] obviously to earn money fast… I would love to have [a job]. There is a stigma when you go for a job, you feel your criminal record will hold you up." (Young Offenders group)

- **Lack of continuity and consistency of support:** The Kirkham group highlighted that there are often disruptions in service provision for offenders at key transition points: when they move from community to prison, between prisons, and from prison to community. In addition, there was also a reported lack of continuity regarding accommodation / housing. Some prisoners had experience of being released from prison and having no other option but to live in a hostel. Some refused to stay in hostels, choosing to sleep rough instead, because they considered hostels to be full of drugs and crime.

People also identified variations in the level and quality of support offered in different geographical areas in relation to mental health, drug / alcohol problems and housing.

People who attempted to relocate to another area upon release from prison found that, since they were not originally from the area they wanted to move to, they were not given priority status for social housing. This often resulted in homelessness.

Some specific issues were also identified in terms of the vocational qualifications received from the Army, with some civilian employers not recognising these qualifications or understanding the transferable value of these. Some individuals also raised the fact that military terminology / language was a barrier to obtaining civilian employment.

"You are always starting from scratch." (Kirham group)

"I had a breakdown before I went to prison and they [prison counsellors] listened. But I don't know what I am going to get when I'm released." (Kirkham group)

- **Difficulties in accessing courses, or the resources to participate in them:** The Channings Wood group highlighted that the limited provision of courses as well as limited access to further and higher education in prison were barriers to learning in prison. In addition, those on indeterminate sentences found it difficult to access vocational courses or distance learning opportunities since priority is given to offenders with early release dates.

Offenders suggested that there should be a greater focus on enabling learners to gain access to courses beyond the most basic level at a time when they are ready to take them. Two-thirds of the Channings Wood group said they wanted to pursue further education, but did not know how to access the relevant courses. Similarly, the young offenders frequently complained that the educational opportunities offered in prison were below their level, or not related to what they wanted to do.

"The door needs to be open when you are ready to change." (Channings Wood group)

"When I started my sentence I couldn't read too well, but got help from a literacy course. I started an Open University course and got 90 points, but I'm not allowed a laptop here." (Channings Wood group)

"They try and get you to go on a training scheme with something you don't want to do. I don't want to be a carpenter or a plumber." (Young Offenders group)

Addressing the barriers

14.8 It was suggested that outside agencies (which deliver in-prison services) need to more effectively communicate what they offer, and the knowledge of prison officers needed to be improved so that they can better signpost prisoners to

appropriate services. Other suggestions for addressing barriers to this group's move back to the community included:

- **Offering a wider variety of courses in prison:** The Channings Wood group said they wanted a wider range of courses to be available. Most thought that more practical, trade-based courses with direct links to employment would be best – particularly as it is easier to be self-employed with such skills and thus providing greater flexibility for individuals with an offending history. It was also suggested that prisoners who already have these skills could teach them to others.

  "We want courses that mean you can take away a trade." (Channings Wood group)

  "Why don't they get in some old cars? There's enough trained mechanics amongst the inmates to set up a workshop teaching people vehicle maintenance and repair." (Channings Wood group)

- **Allowing enterprises to be set up within the prison:** This would provide offenders with practical experience – the lack of which can be a significant barrier to employment upon release.

- **Facilitating peer support:** Participants in the Kirkham group identified support from others as crucial to prevent reoffending. Offenders particularly saw the benefit of having peer support structures in place when they leave prison – that is support from people who had had similar experiences – whether of prison or serving in the armed forces or both. The young offenders also suggested that peer support would be helpful to them.

Those in the Channings Wood group suggested that peer support could begin in prison. For example, some prisoners already have trade skills and therefore could help to teach others. Most of those who participated in the Channings Wood consultation said that using teachers with similar experiences as them would encourage them into learning.

  "I would have found it more helpful if there had been more people who had the same background as me." (Young Offenders group)

  "I found it easier when the people who worked with me understood and had been through the same things that I had been through." (Young Offenders group)

  "I've run my own shop fitting business. I could teach the men here to become dry liners or shop fitters and could find them jobs when they go outside." (Channings Wood group)

Summary

- There was little information available about the aspirations of offenders or ex-offenders. This is a group whose aspirations are seldom heard, although there is some evidence (related to supporting prisoners' transitions back to the community) which is relevant.

- The ability to acquire skills, training and qualifications while in prison; the availability of stable housing and support (including support from peers) are important factors that help offenders to make a successful transition to the community when they are released from prison.

- Barriers for people in achieving their aspirations for training / education in prison and their aspiration for work and housing upon release were identified as: having a criminal record (which made it difficult to obtain employment); a lack information and inconsistent support; and difficulties in accessing courses, or the resources to participate in them while in prison.

15. Discussion

15.1 The aim of this review was to find out about the aspirations of groups of people whose voices are seldom heard. To this end, the focus has been on identifying studies where those voices have been given a prominent place. In the case of some of the groups (for example, offenders and ex-offenders, LGBT people, gypsies / travellers and night workers), it was very difficult to find any relevant studies. Indeed, among these groups of people, research studies have tended to focus on their experiences or their needs, rather than their aspirations.

15.2 In any review of the literature, the findings will inevitably be limited by the evidence available. In this particular review, the effect of this is that the available evidence probably presents an incomplete picture of aspiration among these groups – simply because the interests of researchers, or rather, the interests of research **funders**, are mainly on certain kinds of aspirations: educational, career and housing aspirations.

15.3 In fact, these **are** important aspirations to find out about and, in a policy context, to try to address. However, they are probably not the whole story. A slightly different picture of the aspirations of marginalised groups may have emerged if these groups could be asked a single, simple question: 'What are the five things that are most important to you for the future?' The results may have looked like something more akin to Oxfam Scotland's Humankind Index.[22] It is perhaps worth noting that the top five priorities in the Humankind Index are:

- having an affordable / decent home / a safe and secure home to live in
- being physically and mentally healthy
- living in a neighbourhood where you can enjoy going outside and having a clean and healthy environment
- having satisfying work to do (paid or unpaid)
- having good relationships with family and friends.

15.4 These priorities are clearly reflected in the aspirations identified in this review – as well as in those things that people said helped (or would help) to facilitate their aspirations.

15.5 The remainder of this section will consider the four research questions set out at the beginning of this report, and attempt to answer these, based on the findings of this review.

What does the evidence say about the aspirations of marginalised groups?

15.6 The findings of this review suggest that people who are marginalised have the same aspirations as the rest of us. They would like to have a job, earn an income, find a

---

[22] The Humankind Index is an agreed set of priorities about what people in Scotland feel they need to be able live well in their communities. The Index was developed through direct consultation with more than 3,000 people as a way of measuring what 'a good life' is. See http://policy-practice.oxfam.org.uk/our-work/poverty-in-the-uk/humankind-index for more information.

good balance between their work and home roles, make a valuable contribution to their communities, be independent, live in a nice house in a safe neighbourhood, and generally just be able to have control over and enjoy their own lives.

15.7   There was little evidence that people aspired to be wealthy, although "winning the Lottery" was a relatively common fantasy future among some sex workers. On the other hand, the importance of earning an income was something that came out strongly in relation to many of the groups (possibly because of the focus of certain studies on educational and career aspirations). There was little evidence in any of these studies of people **not** aspiring to work; rather the other circumstances of people's lives often took priority (for example, for single parents, disabled people, and carers) and people sometimes had to choose between looking after a child or an elderly parent and working the hours they would like to work.

15.8   In terms of housing, people's aspirations were to live in a nice, secure house (or in the case of gypsies / travellers, in a caravan) in a safe neighbourhood near to family or friends, and services that they need. While many also aspired to own their own homes, this was by no means a universal aspiration among these groups.

Are there similar, or different, aspirations among different groups?

15.9   This review did not find evidence of major differences in the broad aspirations of different groups. The main differences between them were in the detail. So, for example, a common aspiration for refugees and migrant workers arriving in the UK is to learn English. These groups perceive that the learning of English is the key to their longer-term aspiration of getting a job or taking up further education. An aspiration for sex workers and drug users is to recover from drug addiction. This is the key to their longer-term aspiration of living a 'normal' life.

15.10 Where there were differences in aspirations between groups, these often related very clearly to the circumstances of their lives.

How do people's circumstances affect their aspirations?

15.11 It has been noted, both at the beginning of this report and at various points throughout, that people's aspirations are frequently limited by their circumstances and by the (lack of) opportunities (actual or perceived) that are available to them.

15.12 Chris Creegan, in his *Viewpoint* published by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, spoke of "truncated opportunities" which prevent people's aspirations from being realised.[23] Creegan suggests that opportunities may be truncated in three ways; they may be lost, limited or wasted through circumstances and events that people have varying degrees of control over.

15.13 The findings of this review lend support to this view. For example, there was evidence of:

---

[23] Creegan C (2008) *Opportunity and aspiration: two sides of the same coin?* Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

- the aspirations of young carers being limited as a result of their inability to attend school regularly
- the aspirations of carers and single parents being limited by a lack of affordable and accessible alternative care or childcare
- the aspirations of asylum seekers and refugees being lost because of a government policy that does not permit them to work
- the aspirations of older people being lost because no one ever thinks to ask them for their opinions
- the aspirations of sex workers, drug users and ex-offenders being wasted because of a lack of appropriate housing.

15.14 And so forth.

15.15 Among many of these marginalised groups (young carers, care leavers, single parents, drug users, refugees), a lack of qualifications and in some cases, a lack of confidence, were the main limitations to the attainment of their aspirations. At the same time, there was also some evidence of aspirations being channelled from a relatively early age by parents, carers and schools.

15.16 Rurality was not a major focus in most of the papers reviewed for this project; however, where it was discussed, it was generally seen as presenting further difficulties for people in achieving their aspirations – because of travel times to and from work, lack of available public transport, and inaccessibility and inadequacy of services.

What do people think would help them to achieve their aspirations?

15.17 There were three things that appeared to be commonly identified by people in marginalised groups as helping them to achieve their aspirations. These were: education / training; good information, advice and support services; and positive relationships with other people.

Education / training

15.18 In relation to career aspirations, there was a great deal of evidence from this review to suggest that people in marginalised groups recognise the importance of education and / or training in helping them to achieve their aspirations. However, individual constraints and financial circumstances often lead to people not being able to, or choosing not to, continue with their education.

15.19 While some may undoubtedly prefer (because of their own aspirations) to work rather than carry on with their education, others feel constrained by their circumstances to get a job as quickly as possible – often working far below their skills and abilities, or working in jobs they hate, in order to earn (often) meagre incomes.

15.20 This review has specifically highlighted a need for:

- more accessible English language courses (including higher-level courses and possibly, specialist courses in medicine and teaching) for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants
- further education colleges to ensure that the aspirations, previous educational attainment and personal circumstances of care leavers are taken into account when helping them to decide upon courses
- independent living skills training for young disabled people (including those with learning disabilities)
- a wider range of courses to be offered in prisons.

Information, advice and support

15.21 Appropriate support services and good quality information and advice were also seen to be important. Nearly every one of the marginalised groups discussed in this report had their aspirations limited or lost by a lack of information, advice or support – or because they did not know where to look for it. So, for example:

- Young disabled people need to know about the supports that are available to them for continuing their studies at college or university, and for moving into social rented accommodation.
- Older people (including older LGBT people) would like information and independent advice about the housing options that are available to them for the future.
- Carers need to know about services and supports that are available to them in their area. They also need to have access to free / affordable respite services. Young carers have a very specific need for support to enable them to get to school regularly.
- Single parents need affordable and accessible child care to allow them to return to work.
- Refugees, asylum seekers and migrants have a wide range of information and support needs about practical issues such as: how to find work, how to apply to college / university, help in completing application forms, how to set up a business in the UK, housing options, and how to pay rents / bills.
- Sex workers and drug users need integrated support services for complex needs related to mental and physical health care, housing and employment. They also need information about the help that is available to them.
- Ex-offenders similarly need a continuity of support (for housing, addiction and mental health) when leaving prison. Peer support services were thought to be particularly valuable in helping people not to reoffend.

15.22 In every case, information and advice has to be geared to the special needs, abilities and circumstances of those it is intended for. Flyers and information leaflets are unlikely to be successful as a mechanism for delivering information for many marginalised groups. Rather many of these groups will need information to be provided by **people** – social workers, housing officers, care workers, independent advisors or advocates who have the knowledge and skills to do so.

15.23 And in relation to this, it is important to bear in mind that, although the internet is a key source of information for many people, there are others – particularly those in the marginalised groups in society – who do not use or have access to computers or the internet.

Positive relationships

15.24 Finally, positive relationships appeared to be a key for many people in being able to achieve their aspirations – or to encourage them to keep on trying. The people in these studies often pointed to family, friends, neighbours, foster parents, supportive college lecturers, understanding employers, English teachers, social workers or other service providers as having given them the opportunities, help and support they needed. And for many people – particularly older people and people whose lives have been stigmatised through criminal activity – the strengthening and enjoying of relationships was an important aspiration in its own right.

15.25 It is more challenging to try to find ways of creating the circumstances in which positive relationships can thrive – particularly for people whose lives are chaotic (drug users, offenders, sex workers). However, a great deal could probably be achieved through the funding of outreach or other support services delivered creatively and sensitively.

Conclusion

15.26 This small-scale rapid review has found that the aspirations of marginalised groups are broadly similar to those of other members of society. At the same time, it has shown that the aspirations of these groups are often lost, limited or wasted as a result of truncated opportunities and circumstances which are beyond their control.

15.27 The relatively limited information identified in this review also highlights that there needs to be far more effort made by governments, funding bodies, researchers and professional service providers to actively find out about the aspirations of people whose aspirations are seldom heard about and – to use the language of service providers – to find out what 'outcomes' those individuals would like for future lives. Although some people, if asked, may find it difficult to articulate what they want for their future, others – if they are supported to do so – can say clearly what they would like.

15.28 In closing, it is perhaps worth noting that, in discussing people's aspirations with them, it can be difficult to avoid making value judgements about those aspirations. Thus, many government policies try to 'raise' people's aspirations – as though the aspiration to go to university is intrinsically more valuable than the aspiration to become a plumber, a hair dresser or a bus driver. Or that the aspiration by a single parent to have a job is intrinsically more valuable than the aspiration to look after their child. Or that the aspiration by someone to own their own home is better than having enough space and a feeling of safety in a high-quality rented house.

15.29 These value judgements may be part of the reason that so few of the most marginalised people in our society are seldom asked about their aspirations – it is because many of these individuals do not (and perhaps cannot) aspire to a university education, a full-time job or to own their own homes. In the case of such individuals – that is, those who seem in our judgements to have 'low' aspirations – it is simply easier and politically more acceptable for governments, funding bodies and service providers to focus their attention on meeting **needs** rather than supporting **aspirations.**

References

Ambitious about Autism (2011) Video of 12 young people responding to two questions: 'What do you like about school?' and 'What do you want to do when you leave school?' Available at:
www.ambitiousaboutautism.org.uk/page/about_autism/real_life/young_people.cfm.

Angier P, Havers M & Mann A (2004) *Seizing the opportunities and overcoming the barriers for refugees wanting to set up their own businesses in North East. Final report.* ONE North East and Regional Refugee Forum North East.

Arksey H, Kemp P, Glendinning C, Kotchetkova I & Tozer R (2005) *Carers' aspirations and decisions around work and retirement.* Department for Work and Pensions, Research Report 290.

Arksey H, Beresford B, Glendinning C, Greco V & Sloper T (2007) *Outcomes for parents with disabled children and carers of disabled or older adults: Similarities, differences and the implications for assessment practice.* Social Policy Research Unit, University of York.

Bignall T & Butt J (2000) *Between ambition and achievement. Young black disabled people's views and experiences of independence and independent living.* The Policy Press and Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Bournemouth Alcohol and Drug Service User Forum (2012) *A health needs assessment of Bournemouth's street sex workers.* Available from:
http://www.makesachange.org.uk/cms/site/docs/SEX%20WORKERS%20HEALTH%20NEEDS%20REPORT.pdf

Bowers H, Clark A, Crosby G, Easterbrook L, Macadam A, MacDonald R, Macfarlane A, Maclean M, Patel M, Runnicles D, Oshinaike T & Smith C (2009) *Older people's vision for long-term care.* Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Bowey L & McGlaughlin A (2005) Adults with a learning disability living with elderly carers talk about planning for the future: aspirations and concerns. *British Journal of Social Work, 35:* 1377-1392.

Casey L, Davies P, Kalambouka A, Nelson N & Boyle B (2006) The influence of schooling on the aspirations of young people with special educational needs, *British Educational Research Journal*, 32(2), pp. 273-290.

Charlaff L, Ibrani K, Lowe M, Marsden R & Turney L (2004) *Refugees and asylum seekers in Scotland. A skills and aspirations audit.* Scottish Government.

Centre for Rural Health (CRH) (2010) *Dementia care at home in rural and remote areas. Summary findings of literature review.* UHI Millennium Institute, Scottish Agricultural College, Orkney Islands Council and Scottish Borders Council.

Clarke A (2008) *Refugee teachers in London. Achievements and aspirations*. Refugee Assessment and Guidance Unit (RAGU) and Refugees into Jobs (RIJ).

Connelly G, Duncalf Z, Furnivall J, Seagraves L & Soden R (2011). Supporting care leavers in Scottish further education colleges: A research account of a pilot programme aimed at supporting looked after young people and care leavers in further education colleges in Scotland. Edinburgh: The Scottish Funding Council.

Croucher K (2008) *Housing choices and aspirations of older people. Research from the New Horizons Programme*. Centre for Housing Policy, University of York.

Davis J (2004) *Off the streets. Tackling homelessness among female street-based sex workers*. Shelter.

Dean J (2003) *Unaddressed. The housing aspirations of young disabled people in Scotland*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. (Summary report entitled: *Disabled young adults and the parental home.)*

Dearden C & Becker S (2000) *Growing up caring: Vulnerability and transition to adulthood – young carers' experiences*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

de Lima P, Chaudhry MM, Whelton R & Arshad R (2007) *A study of migrant workers in Grampian*. Community Scotland.

DrugScope & AVA (2013) *The challenge of change. Improving services for women involved in prostitution and substance use*. Available from: www.avaproject.org.uk/media/128481/challenge%20of%20change_full%20report.pdf

Edinburgh Care Leavers Project (undated) Video of eight looked after young people talking about their aspirations for the future. Available at: http://vimeo.com/66143902

Gingerbread (2012) *The only way is up? The employment aspirations of single parents*.

Green AE, Owen D, Jones P, Owen C, Francis J & Proud R (2008) *Migrant workers in the South East regional economy*. University of Warwick and BMG Research.

Gutman LM & Akerman R (2008) *Determinants of aspirations*. Centre for Research on the Wider Benefits of Learning, research report 27. Institute of Education, University of London.

Happer H, McCreadie J & Aldgate J (2006) *Celebrating success: What helps looked after children succeed*. Study commissioned for the review of looked after children in Scotland. Social Work Inspection Agency.

Katz J, Holland C, Peace S & Taylor E (2011) *A better life: what older people with high support needs value*. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Mai N (2011) *Migrant workers in the UK sex industry*. London Metropolitan University Final report for a project funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESCR).

Available at: https://metranet.londonmet.ac.uk/research-units/iset/projects/esrc-migrant-workers.cfm

Mulvey G (2013) *In search of normality. Refugee integration in Scotland. Final report.* Scottish Refugee Council. See also earlier briefing papers from this study dated December 2011 on the Scottish Refugee Council website.

Norman W (2011) *Rough nights. The growing dangers of working at night.* The Young Foundation.

Princes Trust (2004) *Reaching the hardest to reach.* The Prince's Trust. London.

Quaglia RJ & Casey CD (1996) Toward a theory of student aspirations. *Journal of Research in Rural Education, 12:* 127-132.

Reeve K, Casey R, Batty E & Green S (2009) *The housing needs and experiences of homeless women involved in street sex work in Stoke-on-Trent.* Centre for Regional Economic and Social Research.

Refugee Housing Project North East (2002) *Refugee aspirations on 'move on' / second stage / future housing needs in the north east of England.* BOW Community Projects Ltd.

Refugee Resource (2002) *Report of Survey of Refugee and Asylum Seeker Skills and Aspirations in Oxford.*

Richbell S & Chan KW (2011) *Permanent night shifts in the 24/7 economy.* University of York. (Unpublished discussion paper.)

Rickard W (2001) Been there, seen it, done it, I've got the T-shirt. British sex workers reflect on jobs, hopes, the future and retirement. *Feminist Review, 67 (Spring), Sex Work Reassessed:* 111-132.

Scottish Drugs Forum (SDF) with Hammersley R & Dalgarno P (2013) Trauma and recovery amongst people who have injected drugs within the past five years.

Schneider C & Holman D (2009) *Longitudinal study of migrant workers in the East of England.* East of England Development Agency.

Shaw A & Smith A (2010) *Senior drug dependents and care structures: Scotland: qualitative report.* Scottish Drugs Forum.

Steele A (2010) A qualitative assessment of the housing needs and aspirations of older people in Leicestershire. Report for Leicester and Leicestershire Housing Market Area Partnership (HMA).

Tribal Consulting (2008) *Housing migrant workers: the impact on GHA.* Glasgow Housing Association.

User Voice (2011a) *Serving them right? A user perspective on improving resettlement services for ex-service personnel leaving prison.*

User Voice (2011b) *Learning and skills in prison. Offenders given their views on the provision of learning and skills.*

User Voice (2011c) *What's your story? 2011. Excluded Youth Project. How can we work together to reduce youth crime?*

Walker A & Wilkins Z (2013) *Improving the housing and care experiences of LGBT people in later life.* Housing 21.

Williamson T (2010) *My name is not dementia. People with dementia discuss quality of life indicators.* Alzheimer's Society.

Young People's Benchmarking Forum (2011) A collection of photos of 450+ messages from care leavers taken during National Care Leavers week 2011. Available from: https://www.flickr.com/photos/nationalcareleaversweek/