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**Sent:** 12 November 2009 12:51  
**To:** ZZZ Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning; zzzCabinet Secretary for Health; zzzMinister for Children and Early Years  
**Cc:** zzzMinister for Skills and Lifelong Learning; zzzMinister for Public Health and Sport; Greig DJ (Douglas); Wilkinson DM (Diana); Wishart R (Rob); Gillespie G (Gary); Ireland J (John); Campbell AM (Angela); Munro D (Dominic); [Redacted]; [Redacted]; [Redacted] Evans L (Leslie); Woods K (Kevin); Smith S (Sarah); MacLean CR (Colin); Communications DFM & Education; Communications Healthier; Dolan N (Noel); McAllister C (Colin)  
**Subject:** Millennium Cohort Study Sweep 3 (age 5): Publication of results for Scotland

**Tracking:**

Recipient	Read
ZZZ Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning	
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zzzMinister for Skills and Lifelong Learning	
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Greig DJ (Douglas)	Read: 12/11/2009 16:36
Wilkinson DM (Diana)	
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[Redacted]	Read: 12/11/2009 13:31

Please see the attached one page submission (with 5 pages of annexes) regarding the publication of results for Scotland from sweep 3 of the UK-wide Millennium Cohort Study.



Millennium Cohort Study - S...

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Office of Chief Researcher

12 November 2009

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning  
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing  
Minister for Children and Early Years

## MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY SWEEP 3 (AGE 5): PUBLICATION OF RESULTS FOR SCOTLAND

### Purpose

1. To inform you of the forthcoming publication of results for Scotland from sweep 3 of the UK Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), and to seek approval to commission more detailed analysis to examine what is driving some of the key differences between Scotland and other parts of the UK.

### Priority

2. **Routine.** A response by **19 November** will allow the proposed more detailed analysis to be completed in the current financial year.

### Background

3. The MCS is a major longitudinal survey of children born in the UK in 2000-2002 (background information on the study is provided in Annex A). It provides valuable data to inform our understanding of the achievement of a number of National Outcomes and is particularly valuable in enabling us to benchmark the experiences and attributes of Scotland's children against the rest of the UK. UK-wide findings from sweep 3 of the MCS (carried out when the children were aged 5) were published in October 2008 by the Centre for Longitudinal Studies, University of London, and you were informed of those findings at the time. The Office of the Chief Researcher commissioned a short report, 'Millennium Cohort Study: Sweep 3 Scotland Report', which presents data on families living in Scotland, comparing them with families in other parts of the UK. We plan to publish the report electronically on the Scottish Government social research website in early December. Communications colleagues are providing advice on press handling and lines to take.

4. Headline findings from the report, identifying areas where there are differences between Scotland and other parts of the UK are attached at Annex A. We propose to commission more detailed analysis to explore what is driving some of the key differences (see Annex B for more details):

- Children's language test scores were higher in Scotland than in England and Wales.
- Parents in Scotland were more likely than those in England to perceive their area as an 'excellent' place to bring up children and as a 'very safe' place.

### Conclusion

5. You are invited to:

- note the **Scottish findings from MCS3** and arrangements for their publication
- agree to the **commissioning of more detailed analysis of the MCS3 data**

Office of Chief Researcher  
Ext. 47557

12 November 2009



Copy List:	For Action	For Comments	For Information		
			Portfolio Interest	Constit Interest	General Awareness
Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning	X				
Cabinet Secretary for Health and Wellbeing	X				
Minister for Children and Early Years	X				
Minister for Schools and Skills			X		
Minister for Public Health and Sport			X		

Douglas Greig - Head of Strategy and Analytical Service Co-ordination  
 Diana Wilkinson - Chief Researcher  
 Rob Wishart - Chief Statistician  
 Gary Gillespie - Head of Office of the Chief Economic Adviser  
 John Ireland - Head of Education Analytical Services  
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 Karen MacNee - Public Health and Sport Team, Health Analytical Services  
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 Leslie Evans - Director General Education  
 Kevin Woods - Director General Health & Chief Executive of NHS in Scotland  
 Sarah Smith - Director of Children, Young People and Social Care  
 Colin MacLean - Director of Schools Communications Education and Lifelong Learning  
 Communications Health and Wellbeing  
 Noel Dolan - Special Adviser  
 Colin McAllister - Special Adviser

## ANNEX A

### MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY SWEEP 3 (AGE 5): PUBLICATION OF RESULTS FOR SCOTLAND

#### Background information on the Millennium Cohort Study

The Millennium Cohort Study is a major longitudinal survey of children born in the UK in 2000-2002. The survey is funded jointly by the Economic and Social Science Research Council and a consortium of Government Departments and Devolved Administrations including the Scottish Government. Interviews were conducted with families of the children when the children were aged 9 months (sweep 1 – 2001/2), 3 years (sweep 2 – 2004/5) and 5 years (sweep 3 - 2006). In the UK 15,246 families were interviewed at sweep 3, including 1,814 families in Scotland.

#### Headline findings on differences between Scotland and other parts of the UK

All of the differences presented below are statistically significant i.e. we are confident that they represent real differences between children in Scotland and other parts of the UK.

In relation to the Scottish Government's National Performance Framework, they have particular relevance to the following National Outcomes:

- Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens (National Outcome 4)
- Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed (National Outcome 5)
- We live longer, healthier lives (National Outcome 6)
- We have improved the life chances for children, young people and families at risk (National Outcome 8)
- We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need (National Outcome 10)
- We have strong, resilient supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others (National Outcome 11)
- Our public services are high quality, continually improving, efficient and responsive to local people's needs (National Outcome 15)

#### ***Cognitive development and teacher ratings of children's achievement***

(National Outcomes 4 and 5)

- The British Ability Scales (BAS) Naming Vocabulary subtest assesses expressive language ability by asking the child to name a series of pictures of everyday items. The average (mean) Naming Vocabulary score for children in Scotland (57) was higher than that for children in England (55) and Wales (54).
- Children received higher average (mean) overall ratings from their teachers in Scotland (103) than in Wales (96) or Northern Ireland (98). More specifically, their ratings were higher for all categories of achievement (personal social and emotional; communication, language and literacy; mathematical development; knowledge and understanding of the world; and physical development) apart from creative development, for which there was no significant difference between the three countries. Teachers' ratings for England were lower than those in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, but as they were gathered via a different mechanism (the Foundation Stage Profile) they are not directly comparable to those in the devolved administrations.

### **School choice**

(National Outcomes 5 and 15)

- In Scotland, the percentage of parents who were fully satisfied with the school their child attends was higher among those who had requested a particular school (80%) than among those who had not (74%). In the other UK countries, it mattered little whether or not parents had requested the school for parent satisfaction with the school.

### **Parenting**

(National Outcome 5)

- Parents in Scotland (as in Northern Ireland) tended to engage in educational and recreational activities with their children more frequently than those in England. For example, mothers were more likely to do musical activities with their child every day in Scotland (40%) than in England (36%); and fathers in Scotland were more likely to read to their child every day (21%) than those in England (15%) and Wales (15%).
- Fathers were more likely to get their child ready for / put their child to bed several times a week in Scotland (52%) than in England (45%). They were also more likely to look after their child on their own several times a week (33%) than those in England (25%).
- The proportion of mothers who they tell their child off daily for being naughty was higher in Scotland (14%) than in England (11%) and Wales (10%). And the proportion who smack their child when naughty was higher in Scotland (57%) than in Wales (51%), but lower than in Northern Ireland (65%).

### **Child health**

(National Outcomes 5 and 6)

- Children were more likely to be reported to be in 'excellent' health in Scotland (59%) than in England (52%).

### **Parental health**

(National Outcome 6)

- Mothers were more likely to smoke ten or more cigarettes a day in Scotland (22%) than in England (17%), and were less likely to be teetotal (13% vs 19%). However, fathers were less likely to be frequent drinkers (drinking alcohol five times or more a week) in Scotland (11%) than fathers in England (17%) or Wales (17%).

### **Parents' employment and education**

(National Outcomes 5 and 8)

- The proportion of 'stay at home' mothers (i.e. mothers who were looking after the family and home as opposed to in training, employment or looking for employment) was lower in Scotland (34%) than in England (39%).
- Scottish mothers were less likely to have gained additional qualifications since they were last interviewed (14%) than those in England (18%) and Wales (20%).

### **Childcare**

(National Outcomes 11 and 15)

- Children living in Scotland were more likely than those in England to be in any kind of childcare (72% vs 64%), including any kind of non-parental care (53% vs 43%). More specifically, children in Scotland were more likely to receive formal childcare (19% vs 13%), or to be cared for by their grandparent (33% vs 25%) but were no more or less likely to be cared for by another relative, a friend or a childminder, or to attend an after-school club.

### ***Residential mobility and perceptions of local area***

(National Outcomes 10 and 11)

- Levels of residential mobility between sweeps 2 and 3 were higher in Scotland (28%) than England (23%) and Wales (19%).
- People in Scotland were more likely to rate their local area as an 'excellent' place to bring up children (40%) than those in England (30%). They were also more likely to rate their local area as 'very safe' (41% vs 31%), although less likely than those in Northern Ireland (55%).

**Office of Chief Researcher**

12 November 2009

## ANNEX B

### MILLENNIUM COHORT STUDY SWEEP 3 (AGE 5): PUBLICATION OF RESULTS FOR SCOTLAND

#### Proposals for further analysis of MCS sweep 3 data

We propose to commission more detailed analysis of data from sweep 3 of the MCS (when the cohort children were aged 5), in order to explore what is driving some of the key differences between MCS children in Scotland and other parts of the UK. Policy and analytical colleagues are particularly interested in exploring differences in the two areas set out below. The estimated cost of this analysis is £10-15k, and funding is available from the Office of Chief Researcher budget.

#### ***Language ability test scores***

(National Outcomes 4 and 5)

The British Ability Scales (BAS) Naming Vocabulary subtest assesses expressive language ability by asking the child to name a series of pictures of everyday items. Children in Scotland were found to have significantly higher average BAS Naming Vocabulary scores, at both sweeps 2 and 3 of the MCS, than those in other parts of the UK. However, the MCS collects data from a *sample* of families living in Scotland and the rest of the UK, and as such it is subject to bias.

In order to assess this bias, analyses of MCS2 data were undertaken to identify whether the difference in BAS scores reflected a genuine difference attributable to being in Scotland per se, and not simply to the Scottish sample differing from the rest of the MCS sample in terms of measured factors known to influence cognitive ability (such as gender, family type, parental education, parental employment, parental occupation and annual family income). It was concluded that the difference in BAS scores cannot be explained by the gender of the child or the characteristics of MCS families, and must be due to other factors that differ between Scotland and the rest of the UK – such as policy or cultural differences e.g. in early years education provision, pre-school education or activities in the home.

It is now proposed to conduct analysis to determine what is driving the differences in BAS scores between Scotland and other parts of the UK at MCS3. This will be of particular relevance to the Scottish Government's National Outcome 4 (Our young people are successful learners, confident individuals, effective contributors and responsible citizens) and National Outcome 5 (Our children have the best start in life and are ready to succeed).

#### ***Perceptions of local area***

(National Outcomes 10 and 11)

MCS sweep 3 found that respondents in Scotland were more likely to perceive their area as an 'excellent' place to bring up children and as a very safe place than those in England. Sweep 2 reported similar differences, with Scotland higher than both England and Wales on the first variable.

The existing body of evidence shows that neighbourhood perceptions are influenced by a range of factors that could potentially explain the differences between Scotland and England, including area characteristics (e.g. rurality, level of disadvantage, vandalism,



access to public transport, rubbish on street), household characteristics (e.g. satisfaction with home, tenure, proximity of friends and relatives) and public service availability and experience (e.g. childcare, education, health). The proposed research will investigate the explanatory factors underlying the MCS findings to determine whether the difference can be explained by existing data or whether there is an independent country effect.

Analysis to determine what is driving the differences will be of particular relevance to the Scottish Government's National Outcome 10 (We live in well-designed, sustainable places where we are able to access the amenities and services we need) and National Outcome 11 (We have strong, resilient and supportive communities where people take responsibility for their own actions and how they affect others).

**Office of Chief Researcher**

12 November 2009

