

# Focus Report on Mothers aged under 25

## Visual Summary

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The Scottish Government is committed to tackling child poverty. There are six types of households where there is a higher risk of children being in poverty.

**Disabled**



**Mother under 25**



**3+ Children**



**Minority Ethnic**



**Baby under 1**



**Lone Parents**



Scottish Government research helps to understand the experiences of these groups and the issues they face. This report focuses on households where there is a mother aged 25 or under.



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## Families with mothers aged under 25 are more likely to ...



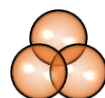
be in poverty than other households



be in poverty despite having paid work



live with children's grandparents



belong to other groups at risk of poverty

## Research

We talked to mothers under 25 on low incomes to understand more about their experiences of:

- Childcare
- Work
- Housing
- Their financial situation
- Different types of support





## What We Found Out ...



### Having enough to get by

The ability to raise income, either through employment or social security, is limited for mothers under 25. This restricts the choice they have to live with dignity.

On average, mothers under 25 earn less from work ...



...they are entitled to less from some DWP benefits



...and are more likely to be lone parents, relying on one source of income



Many mothers we talked to told us that they struggled to make ends meet, and some had to make sacrifices to be able to get by.



Policies should aim to ensure young mothers have enough money and are able to pursue work or training while ensuring the wellbeing of their children.

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## Work

There are certain disadvantages young mothers face in trying to find and stay in work with decent pay:

**Less time to build work experience**



**Difficulties to find childcare that fits around work/study**



**Lower hourly pay for under 23s**



**Less likely to get maternity pay**



Many mothers told us they wanted to take-up, or return to, work or education after having their baby...

...but were unsure how they would balance this with childcare...



... or how it would affect money from social security



Funded ELC (Early Learning and Childcare) can make it easier for young mothers to find work, but funded hours do not always fit around different types of work and places at nurseries can be limited.



## Living Costs

Day to day costs such as transport, housing, food and fuel can add to the financial pressures for young mothers on low incomes. They spend more of their income on essentials compared to other low income households.

## Family Support



For many young mothers, family members (mainly parents) helped out with childcare and finances.

*"I had a lot of support from both my side and boyfriend's side of the family - financially but with social side too"*



Some people, though, were not able to rely on family support - for example, if their parents lived further away, or had other responsibilities. Others had difficult relationships with their families, sometimes as a result of becoming pregnant at a young age

## Formal Support



Evidence suggests that younger mothers are less comfortable accessing formal support, despite also often being in greater need of it.

Some mothers told us that they would have found it helpful to mix with more younger parents but it was difficult to find groups and places where this happened.



Stigma can be an issue for mothers under 25. A few mothers said that they felt that being a young mum meant that they were treated negatively by people in formal support roles.

A lot of young mothers are supported by the Family Nurse Partnership. People we talked to tended to have very positive experiences of this support.



*"I've got my family nurse; I trust her opinion rather than anyone else. I can message her 24 hours a day and she gets back to us when she can and then we meet up every 2 weeks."*



## Supporting Mothers under 25

Mothers under 25 generally have less earning potential than older people.



Poverty alleviation policies could seek to **boost incomes** for this group.

Supporting young mothers to **begin, or continue, in further education** can improve future prospects for young mothers.



**Flexible and affordable childcare** can help young mothers pursue work or educational opportunities.