



Research on understanding barriers to and promoting use of reusable nappies in Scotland

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Executive Summary

Introduction

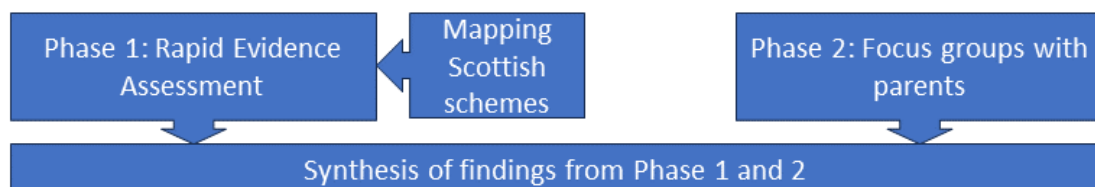
Disposable nappies, composed of plastics and mixed materials, consume resources and pose challenges for waste management in Scotland. At the same time, families spend considerable sums of money on disposable nappies in the early years of a child's life. Modern reusable nappies offer an alternative option to disposables, however uptake of reusables is currently low. This research report, commissioned in support of The Scottish Government's [Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030](#), provides evidence to inform future policy action to encourage a sustained increase in the use of reusable nappies in Scotland.

Research objectives:

- 1) Develop a thorough understanding of the behaviours and motivations of families around nappy choices, both what encourages and prevents them from using reusable nappies.
- 2) Understand the overall impacts of schemes to increase reusable nappies.

Methods

The research comprised a Rapid Evidence Assessment of academic and grey literature, supplemented by identification of existing schemes to support use of reusable nappies in Scotland, alongside in-depth qualitative research in the form of focus groups with parents of children aged 0-5 years.



Key Findings: Barriers and motivations to adoption of reusable nappies

- **Disposables are seen as a default** – Strong social norms favouring disposable nappies mean that many parents do not even consider that there is a choice to be made when it comes to nappies.
- **Drivers of uptake of reusables centre on environmental impacts, costs and babies' health** – Motivations for adopting reusables, reported in the evidence review (see Figure A overleaf) and in the focus groups centre around reducing environmental impact, achieving cost savings and reducing babies' exposure to chemicals associated with disposable nappies. While environmental concerns are

emphasised in published evidence, our focus groups found cost savings to be more prominent in the minds of participants who already use/have used reusables.

- **Barriers to the adoption of reusable nappies are numerous and may be compounded for certain groups** – A wide range of interconnected barriers were highlighted in the evidence review (see Figure B overleaf). Time and labour involved in washing and drying reusable nappies feature strongly and the literature highlights the often gendered nature of this work. While the initial cost outlay is a particular concern for low income families, focus groups also highlighted concerns around the costs of laundering and associated heating costs when drying indoors. For focus group participants that predominantly used disposables, financial considerations were more often a barrier than a motivation for using reusables.

Figure A: Motivations for adopting reusable nappies *

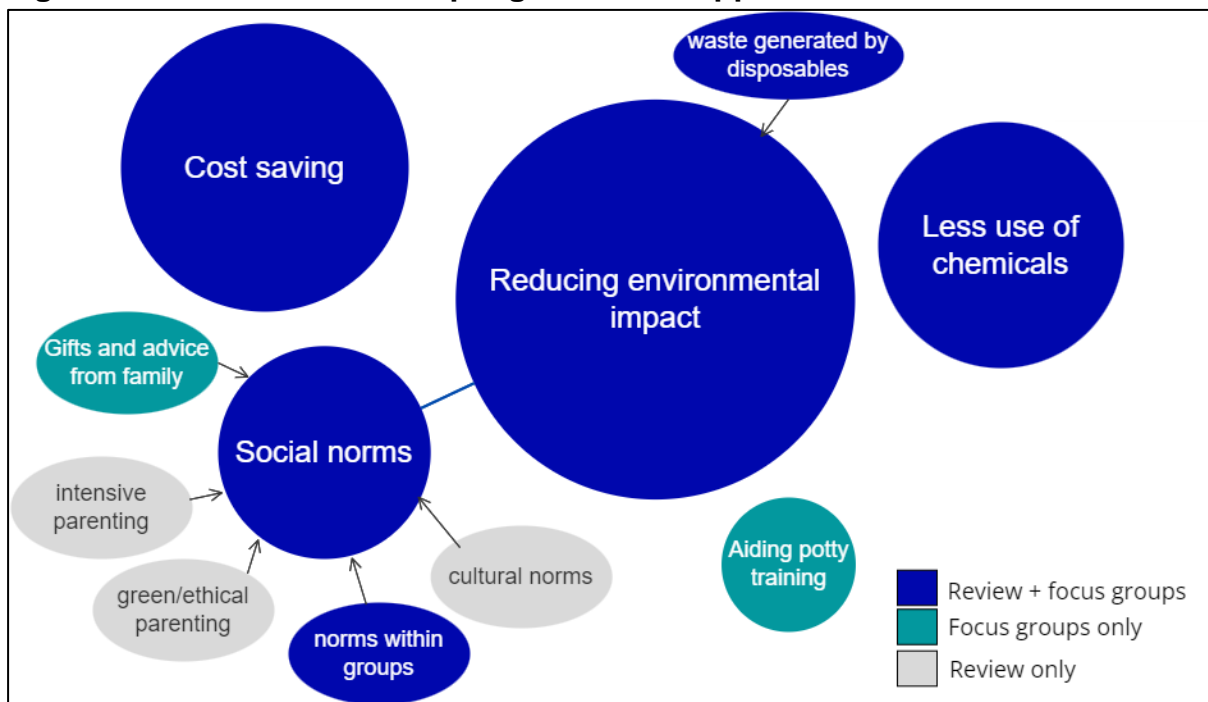
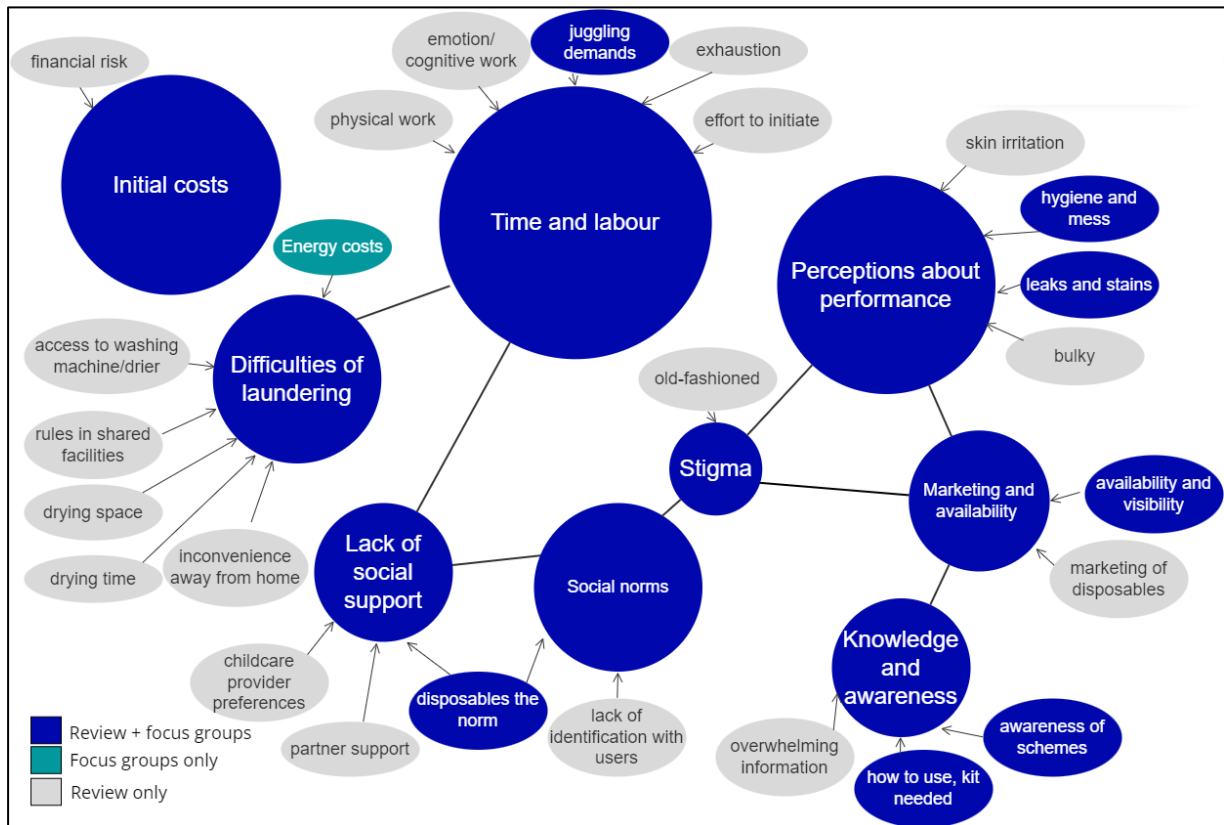


Figure B: Barriers to uptake of reusable nappies *



* Bubbles sized to give indication of prominence across studies reviewed (not to scale)

Key Findings: Schemes to support and encourage use of reusable nappies

- **There is a limited evidence base on the effectiveness of reusable nappy schemes or interventions** – The evidence review highlighted a range of scheme types, however evidence on the impacts of each scheme type was limited, with studies often suffering from poor quality research designs or lack of necessary information provided to judge the accuracy of reported impacts.
- **There are examples in the literature which point to potentially promising interventions for supporting greater uptake of reusables, however more research is needed** – The evidence review highlights reusable nappy kit provision, nappy laundry services, and financial incentives such as voucher schemes as of potential value in increasing adoption. At the same time, however, focus groups suggested that nappy laundry services in particular may be unappealing to many parents.
- **There are a range of schemes operating in Scotland, but very little available evidence evaluating their impacts** – Our preliminary mapping of local and regional Scottish schemes highlighted established networks of nappy libraries run by charities and community organisations. Some examples of reusable nappy kit provision schemes and cashback/grant schemes, operated by or in partnership with local authorities, were also identified.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the rapid evidence assessment and focus groups, we propose the following recommendations for future policy development and practical action to increase adoption of reusable nappies in Scotland. These are expanded on in greater detail in the report.

1. Work with parents to develop policy options that take into account the experiences of diverse groups of parents.
2. Support the development of the evidence base on reusable nappy schemes through trials/pilot projects with robust evaluation built in.
3. Develop a Scotland-specific Life Cycle Assessment to tailor estimations of scheme or policy impacts to the Scottish context.
4. Increase the visibility of reusable nappies in health services, shops and the media, through early and repeated exposure in pregnancy and beyond and supporting opportunities for hands on experience.
5. Avoid setting reusables against disposables; many parents find reusables more manageable when used in combination with disposables.
6. Address gender inequalities in nappy care work by engaging dads in nappy choices and laundering of reusables.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Context

The management of waste from single-use disposable baby nappies is of growing concern globally. An estimated total of 6.7 million tonnes of disposable nappies were used across the EU in 2017, equating to 2.7% of the total municipal solid waste (Copello, 2021). Disposable nappies are composed of high proportions of plastic and other mixed materials, which, in combination with the presence of faeces in used nappies makes them challenging and expensive to recycle (Copello, 2021). This means they are one of the main residual problem products remaining after separation of waste for recycling (Arnold et al., 2023). In the EU overall, disposables have tended to be disposed of in landfill (87% in 2017), with the rest (13%) incinerated (Copello, 2021). In the UK, prioritisation of energy recovery from waste in recent decades has meant that the majority of residual waste is now incinerated (78%), with only 22% going to landfill (Defra, 2023).

Reusable nappies (also referred to as cloth nappies or real nappies) offer an alternative to disposable nappies. Whilst reusable nappies were once an essential item, the advent of disposable nappies, coinciding with increasing numbers of women continuing in or re-entering the workforce after starting a family, led to disposable nappies replacing reusables as the dominant type of nappy used by families (Randles, 2022). Modern reusable nappies differ from traditional cloth nappies in a number of ways – they are more breathable, absorbent, quicker drying and more user friendly (Delgadillo et al., 2021). Modern cloth nappies are available in a wide range of styles and are mainly comprised of a two-part system – an absorbent part (usually produced from cotton, bamboo or hemp) and a waterproof cover or wrap (Plotka, 2022). Some styles combine these two parts into an all-in-one single nappy.

The Scottish Government's draft [Circular Economy and Waste Route Map to 2030](#) includes an objective to drive responsible consumption, production and reuse. As part of this, action to further develop measures to improve the reuse experience for consumers is proposed. This report seeks to contribute to the evidence base supporting Scottish Government decision-making on potential measures in relation to increasing uptake of reusable nappies.

1.2 Research objectives

The aim of this report is to provide baseline evidence on factors supporting and constraining uptake of reusable nappies in Scotland. The objectives of the research were to:

- 1) Develop a thorough understanding of the behaviours and motivations of families around nappy choices, both what encourages and prevents them from using reusable nappies.

- 2) Understand the overall impacts of schemes to increase reusable nappies use.

In fulfilling these objectives, the research brief specified that the research should consider both individual/family-level choices and also the wider social systems that enable or constrain the use of reusable nappies.

2 Methodology

2.1 Overview of research design

The research consisted of two phases:

Phase 1: Rapid evidence Assessment

A rapid evidence assessment was conducted to identify evidence on behaviours and attitudes of parents in relation to reusable nappies and the wider systems that influence these. This also included assessment of the evidence on impacts of schemes or interventions to support reusable nappy uptake.

Phase 2: Collection of primary data

In the second stage of the research, focus groups were carried out with parents in Scotland to help address gaps in the existing evidence base, as identified in phase 1.

The following sections outline the research methods used in Phase 1 and Phase 2 in more detail.

2.2 Rapid evidence review method

The rapid evidence assessment/rapid review methodology adopted comprises elements of a systematic literature review (e.g. replicable search strategy, transparent inclusion/exclusion criteria), conducted over a short timescale for the timely production of policy relevant research (Thomas et al., 2013). Due to time constraints rapid reviews are necessarily less comprehensive and rigorous than full systematic reviews, including e.g. more limited search strategies, narrower scope or considering a narrower range of research methods. A review protocol was agreed with Scottish Government colleagues prior to literature searching commencing. The full protocol can be seen in Appendix A.

2.2.1 Scope

The review included both academic and grey literature published within the last 20 years. Academic literature included original research articles and literature reviews. Grey literature included research reports, working papers, briefings etc. In addition to the grey literature documents sourced through the grey literature searches, a limited review of general website content relating to specific schemes operating in Scotland was also conducted.

The geographic scope of the review included high-income countries in Western Europe, North America and Australasia, for comparability with the Scottish context. Further details on the inclusion/exclusion criteria adopted is shown in Appendix A.

2.2.2 Search strategy

Academic literature was sourced through searches conducted on the Web of Science database and Google Scholar. Grey literature was identified through targeted searching of websites of relevant organisations (Scotland, UK and international), and through Google Scholar searches. A list of organisational websites searched is included in Appendix A. One further grey literature source, a relevant report cited in a reviewed source was also included (snowball sampling).

Search strings incorporated combinations of the keywords shown in Table 1 below. All search strings and numbers of returns were recorded. Returns were screened against inclusion/exclusion criteria on the basis of title and abstract in the first instance.

Table 1: Keywords used in academic and grey literature searches

Reusability keywords	Nappies keywords	Behavioural keywords	Intervention keywords	Environmental impact keywords
Reusable Cloth Real	Nappies/nappy Diaper	Behaviour Behavior Attitudes Perception Barrier Motivation	Intervention Evaluat* Scheme Initiative	'Environmental impact' 'carbon footprint' LCA

*indicates inclusion of related words with different endings e.g. evaluation/evaluate/evaluating

2.2.3 Additional desk-based mapping of Scottish schemes

As a supplement to the literature review, a further desk-based activity mapping reusable nappy schemes or interventions thought to be operational in Scotland was performed to give an indication of the supports currently available (Appendix D). This included searching of website content from local authorities, reusable nappy networks, Google, and social media.

2.3 Primary data collection method

The focus group methodology has the capacity to produce rich qualitative data on specific themes, while considering a range of perspectives. According to Guest et al. (2017), focus group research can reveal up to 90% of the 'discoverable themes' within three to six focus groups. With this in mind, focus groups were selected as a suitable data collection method due to the time constraints of the research project. Online focus groups are considered to provide similarly rich qualitative data to in person, face to face focus groups (Abrams et al., 2015). Additionally, online focus

groups allow for a greater range of participants due to the ability to join from any location, while reducing the financial and time cost to participants as travel is not required. Online focus groups do however have limitations such as the risk of technical problems causing participant withdrawal, greater input needed from the facilitator to direct the conversation and less room for elaboration from participants due to the dynamic of online interactions.

2.3.1 Focus Group Design

The primary data collection involved the facilitation of 3 online focus groups (1-1.5 hour duration each) comprised of parents in Scotland with children aged between 0-5 years old. A market research services provider (QRS) was used to recruit, screen and compensate participants as well as to collect demographic data as part of the screening process. Each focus group was designed to have 6 participants, with a mix of people from rural and urban areas, a mix of men and women, a range of ages, as well as participants with varying levels of experience with reusable nappies. At the time of data collection, 2 participants withdrew from the focus groups due to personal circumstances preventing participation, resulting in a total of 16 participants overall. The 1-1.5 hr long focus groups were held online via MS Teams and were audio and video recorded with consent from participants. Two researchers were present in the focus groups, with one researcher facilitating the conversation and one researcher note-taking and providing technical assistance where necessary. The questions included in the focus group schedule were informed by the early findings of the rapid evidence review, as well as direction from Scottish Government colleagues on particular themes of interest. The focus group schedule was designed to explore experiential knowledge of nappy use, the attitudes towards reusable nappies, the external influences that shape nappy choices, knowledge and awareness of nappy schemes, the potential influence of environmental concern on nappy choices, and the barriers and motivators surrounding nappy choices and use.

2.3.2 Focus Group Composition

The market research services provider screened participants on the following demographics: age, gender, participant occupation, working status, chief wage earner occupation, marital status, ethnicity, and location. Additional screener questions were asked to ensure participants had sufficient experiential knowledge regarding nappy choices and use with young children. These questions included whether participants had children aged 0-5 years, the life stage of children and whether participants had experience with reusable nappies. A longlist of screening questions were used in order to ensure a range of experiences within each focus group, rather than for the purpose of demographic comparison in the analysis of the qualitative data. All focus group participants had children aged 0-5 years old at the time of data collection and the age range of participants was between 25 and 43 years across the three focus groups. The overall demographics of the focus groups are summarised below.

Table 2: Overall Focus Group Composition

Experience with Reusables	Rural / Urban Residence	Gender	Ethnicity	Occupation Status	Marital Status
8 Yes	6 Rural	6 Male	4 Asian	7 Full Time Employment	14 Married/Cohabiting
8 No	10 Urban	10 Female	12 White	7 Part Time Employment	1 Divorced/Separated
				2 Maternity/Paternity Leave	1 Single

3 Findings: Overview of the evidence base on reusable nappies

In total, 48 documents were included in the review, of which 33 were academic publications and 15 grey literature documents (see Figure 1 for more detail). Of the 48 documents included, the majority (69%) were academic publications. Table 3 shows key characteristics of the literature reviewed.

Figure 1: Overview of sources included in review

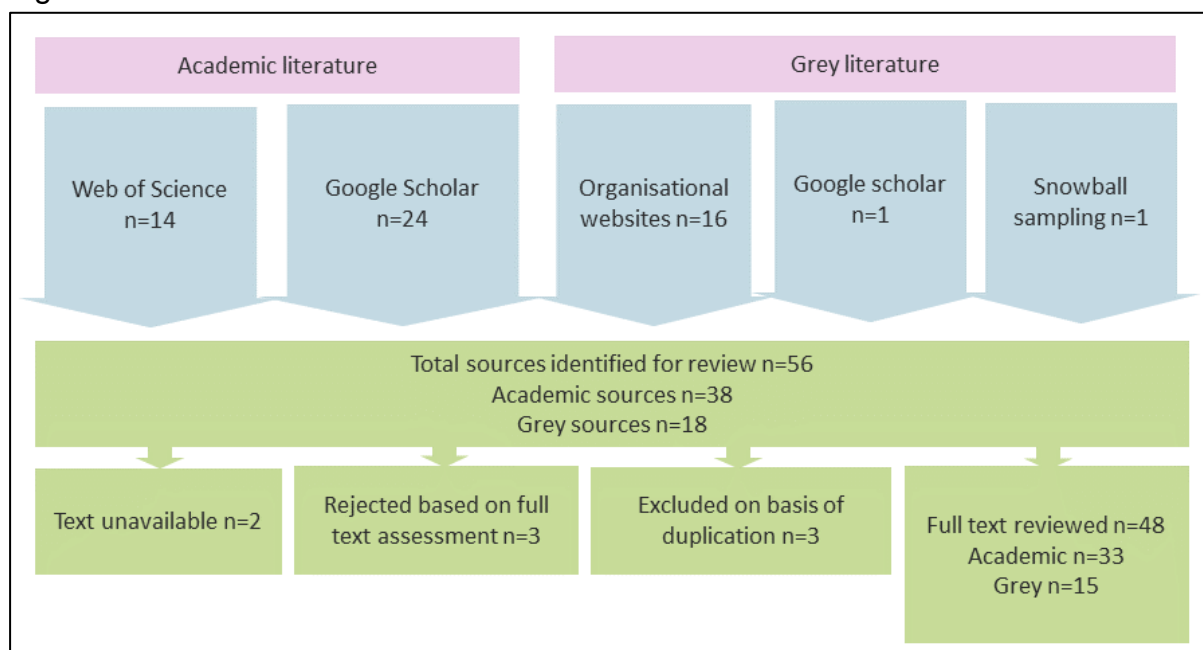


Table 3: Characterisation of literature reviewed

Characteristic	Category	Number of sources	%
Literature type	Academic	33	69
	Grey	15	31
Method	Quantitative	11	23
	Qualitative	11	23
	Mixed	12	25
	Review	13	27
	Other	1	2
Geography	Scotland	8	17
	Rest of UK	13	27
	W Europe/whole EU	7	15
	North America	7	15
	Australasia	3	6
	International (reviews/multi-region studies)	8	17
	Unclear	2	4

Study theme	Nappy attitude/behaviour study only	11	23
	Nappy scheme evaluation	13	27
	Nappy scheme case study description	6	13
	General impact assessment	10	21
	Other	8	17

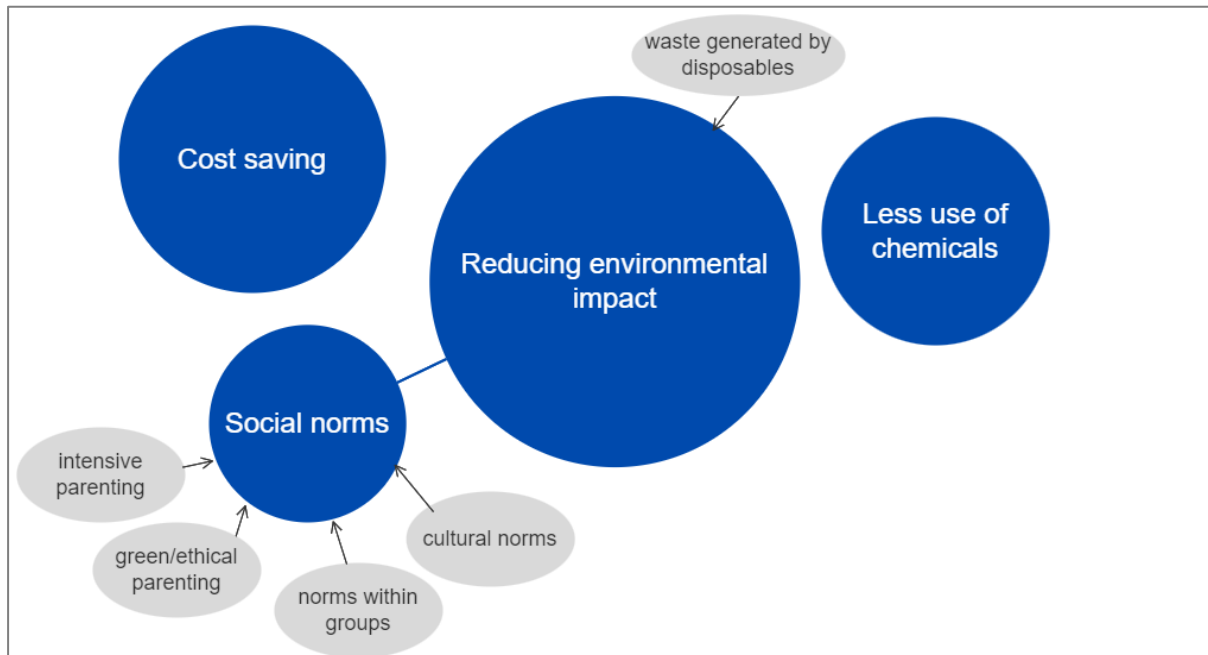
The original research drew on qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods. Thirteen review studies were also included. Review articles tended to focus on the environmental impacts of different types of nappies and on household waste prevention schemes more broadly. No reviews focused specifically on attitudes and behaviours towards reusable nappies. Studies were classified according to the main theme of relevance to the review. Eleven sources primarily offered insights in relation to attitudes and behaviours and 13 featured some level of evaluation of nappy schemes (with or without additional information on attitudes and behaviours). Six sources described examples of reusable nappy schemes but did not assess impacts. Sources classed within the ‘other’ theme focused on a broad range of topics including potty training, environmental justice, poverty and nappy/diaper need, and general waste prevention.

4 Findings: Motivations and barriers influencing uptake of reusable nappies

4.1 Existing evidence on motivations for uptake of reusable nappies

The rapid evidence review found several sources exploring parents’ motivations for using reusable nappies. Reducing environmental impact emerged fairly consistently as the greatest driver of uptake, however cost savings were also highlighted as an important consideration, along with perceptions about the naturalness of reusable versus disposable nappies and beliefs about implications for babies’ health. The motivations highlighted in the review are summarised in Figure 2 and explored in more detail below.

Figure 2: Motivations for adopting reusable nappies. Bubbles sized to give indication of prominence in literature (not to scale)



4.1.1 Reducing environmental impact

By far the most common reason for uptake of reusables, cited both by parents and by operators of nappy schemes or services in the academic and grey literature, is to reduce the environmental impact of nappy use (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012; Watson et al., 2023). In a 2005 UK-based survey of reusable nappy users, 83% reported choosing reusable nappies because they are more environmentally friendly (Environment Agency, 2005b). Specifically, concerns about the volume of waste associated with disposable nappies, which is very visible and tangible, and the idea of this waste going to landfill are strong motivators (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Uzzell & Leach, 2003). Cloth nappy users were noted as being well informed about the environmental impacts of reusable versus disposable nappies, and often express a strong sense of environmental identity and emotional connection to environmental issues (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012).

At the same time, environmental concern does not necessarily lead to reusable nappy use. The literature highlights tension and even guilt felt by parents using disposable nappies around the waste generated (Pendry et al., 2012). In some cases, parents highlighted ways in which other pro-environmental behaviours undertaken were felt to offset, or compensate for, the waste generated by disposables (Gibson et al., 2013; Pendry et al., 2012). Others questioned the overall impact of a family switching to reusables, highlighting other environmental impacts e.g. energy use in laundering (Pendry et al., 2012).

The actual environmental impacts of nappy choices have been explored in the literature, particularly through the use of Life Cycle Assessment approaches which estimate the various environmental impacts associated with production, use and end-of-life phases of nappy product lives (see Box 1).

4.1.2 Cost effectiveness

Overall cost savings are another commonly reported motivation for choosing reusable nappies (Environment Agency, 2005b; Pendry et al., 2012). In the 2005 UK study, 68% of reusable nappy users surveyed reported reusable nappies being cheaper/more economical as a reason for use (Environment Agency, 2005b). Saving money was discussed as a primary motivation for participants in reusable nappy incentive schemes including voucher schemes (Warner et al., 2017) and a pilot project providing a free reusable nappy kit (Renkert & Filippone, 2023). Development research for Scotland's baby box initiative found that, for some low income families, the potential inclusion of reusable nappies was viewed as favourable due to the potential for cost savings (Scottish Government, 2017a). At the same time however, potential cost savings are often not seen as being persuasive enough to overcome the barriers to use of reusable nappies (See section 4.3) (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Scottish Government, 2017a).

4.1.3 Avoiding chemicals in disposable nappies

Another reason for choosing reusable nappies, highlighted in multiple sources, relates to the use of chemicals in disposable nappies. In the 2005 UK survey, 31% reported being motivated to use reusable nappies because they contain less chemicals than disposables (Environment Agency, 2005b). Qualitative research highlighted that some cloth nappy users disliked disposable nappies for reasons including their use of chemicals and are motivated to reduce exposure to these for health reasons (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012; Renkert & Filippone, 2023; Wilks, 2004).

Box 1: Environmental impacts of nappy choices – evidence from Life Cycle Assessments

Studies have found that although end of life scenarios for disposable nappies may feature strongly in the environmental footprint (Defra, 2023), this is very dependent on region (Ng et al., 2013) and method of rubbish disposal (Velasco Perez et al., 2021), with unsanitary landfill showing increased impacts (United Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021; Hoffman, 2020). Exploration into recycling options show the potential for reducing impact (United Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021), but this needs further investigation. Routinely initial production stage and raw materials are identified as having the highest impact in the disposable nappy lifecycle (Defra, 2023; Velasco Perez et al., 2021). As a result, the responsibility for reducing the environmental impact in disposable nappies lays with the manufacturers, with a decrease in weight since the initial impact studies in the UK (Environment Agency, 2005a, 2008) credited for a 27% reduction in the resulting carbon footprint (Defra, 2023).

Conversely, with reusable nappy usage, the onus for reducing environmental impact lays with the user, with laundering highlighted as the main contributor. Though it is generally concluded that reusable nappies have the potential to be lower in carbon footprint, this is dependent on optimised washing behaviour (washed in cold water and line dried ((O'Brien et al., 2009), with increased wash load size (Environment Agency, 2005a). Use of alternate methods, e.g. tumble drying, can increase the resulting carbon footprint and have the potential to cause substantial overlap (United Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021) with carbon impacts from using disposables. Criticisms have been raised about the likelihood that users will chose to use the optimised behaviour over convenience of using of a tumble dryer (Daae & Boks, 2015). As a result, education might be required to increase the likelihood of achieving lowered impacts (United Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021). The Environment Agency (2005a) found no benefit in carbon footprint from the use of commercial nappy laundry services, but a more modern study set in Brazil (Hoffmann et al., 2020) found them beneficial. This discrepancy may be down to geographic and behavioural differences, or may be due to increased efficiency between systems in 2005 and 2020. United Nations Environment Programme et al., (2021) provide a matrix for policymakers, to help guide decisions on whether disposable or reusable systems might be more appropriate to support based on context (geographical, technological and behavioural). Where people are already eco-conscious, reusables are a favourable option. The exception to this is in instances where there are poor laundering services, electricity that has a high carbon footprint or low number of uses per nappy. In countries/regions where consumers may be considered as indifferent, the matrix recommends disposables as the most appropriate option, except in instances where there is a high likelihood of inappropriate disposal of the single use nappies (classed as littering, flushing down the toilet or disposed of with recyclables). It is noted by the authors that electricity price might increase the likelihood of optimised laundering behaviour, though

perhaps it might also effect the likelihood of someone choosing to use renewable nappies in the first place.

Though reusable nappies have the potential to be lower in carbon footprint than disposables, this is not true of all environmental impacts. In a total of 18 impact categories, reusables only showed lower impacts in 7 categories (GWP, fresh water eutrophication, terrestrial ecotoxicity, human non carcinogenic toxicity, land use, fossil resource scarcity and water use) while disposables remained lower in the remaining 11 (stratospheric ozone depletion, ionizing radiation, ozone formation-human health, fine particulate matter formation, ozone formation – terrestrial ecosystems, terrestrial acidification, marine eutrophication, freshwater ecotoxicity, marine ecotoxicity, human carcinogenic toxicity, mineral resource scarcity) (Defra, 2023). This shows that there is a trade-off between the two systems, and which system is considered preferential may be down to individual interests.

4.1.4 Social pressures and social norms

Although the majority of parents use exclusively disposable nappies, the literature highlighted ways in which social pressures can act upon nappy choices in favour of reusables. Nappy choices can be tied up with perceptions around what constitutes good care – Randles (2022) notes social pressures placed on parents, particularly mothers, to be seen to parent intensively and demonstrate high levels of care. These can include pressures to adopt ethical and environmentally sustainable parenting practices (Randles, 2022).

At the same time, social norms can operate differently within different groups – social influence tends to be strongest in relation to norms of reference groups that we identify strongly (Masson et al., 2016). Askins and Bulkeley (2005) noted increasing social pressure to use reusable nappies, in the context of rising use amongst middle class parents. This raises questions about how reusable nappy use has changed more recently amongst different groups. Wider literature on pro-environmental behaviour indicates that normative influences operate not only through perceptions of what other people think we should do (injunctive norms) and, more importantly, what other people actually do (descriptive norms) but also the information we glean about how others' behaviour is changing over time (dynamic norms). Where we detect that adoption of a behaviour is increasing, this can motivate change even when the behaviour is still relatively marginal (Sparkman & Walton, 2017).

Having prior experience of reusable nappies, both through personal experience and through familiarity with them because friends and family use(d) them has the potential to motivate uptake of schemes promoting reusable nappies. One study in the US had exceptionally high uptake among refugee families from countries in the global south where reusable nappies are the norm, and amongst whom reusable nappies were familiar and preferred (Renkert & Filippone, 2023).

4.1.5 Other benefits associated with reusable nappies

Whilst the focus above is on what motivates parents to choose reusable nappies in the first place, the literature also highlights a number of benefits of reusable nappies that encourage users to continue reusable nappy use in the long term, referred to as 'stay factors' by Pendry et al. (2012). These include: satisfaction with the performance of reusable nappies, which may exceed initial expectations regarding leakage etc., aesthetic aspects of reusable nappies, social connections developed with other users, and having a consistent supply of nappies (Pendry et al., 2012; Renkert & Filippone, 2023).

Pendry et al. (2012) found that users valued the range of choice and aesthetics of reusable nappies and wraps, with colourful designs felt to be fashionable and appealing (although not universally appreciated, see Section 4.3.5). Some users discussed developing a strong interest in different designs and a 'buzz' from adding new ones to their collection. The idea that cloth nappy use can become an interest, even akin to a hobby, rather than just a purely instrumental consumer choice, is

reinforced by the development of communities of interest among cloth nappy users. The social connections developed through engaging with user communities, especially online, was reportedly highly valued by some users (Pendry et al., 2012).

4.2 Insights into motivations from focus groups

A number of the prompts used in the focus groups sought to explore what motivated use of cloth nappies (see Appendix B). It is important to highlight the varying levels of experience with cloth nappies within the focus groups, as the motivations found in the focus groups particularly covered the motivation to 'try' cloth nappies, with very few participants maintaining this choice long term. Of the eight participants in our focus groups that had tried reusable nappies, only four had used them for a significant amount of time (here, classed as a minimum of 4-5 months). The remaining four participants had some experience with cloth nappies but did not continue using them shortly after their first attempts. Notably, only one participant had maintained use of cloth nappies with all children for the entirety of their early years before potty training. Another participant used cloth nappies up until potty training completion for the first child but did not continue use with their later children. This is reflected on further later in the discussion about the barriers to uptake and sustained use of cloth nappies (see section 4.4).

Box 2: What motivated focus group participants to use/try cloth nappies?

- Cost savings
- Concerns about environmental impact of disposables
- Kinder materials for baby's skin (plastic-free)
- Facilitating potty training & weaning off nappies altogether
- Advice and gifted nappies from parents & grandparents
- Seeing friends use cloth nappies for their children

Although environmental reasons were acknowledged as being of importance, cost was the major driver for two of the longest users of the nappies. One participant had been given a set of reusable nappies by his mother as he had his first child younger in life when financially tight. The other participant knew about environmental reasons for using reusables but stated that his primary motivation was the cost factor, appreciating that it would be cheaper in the long run. Of the two remaining longest users, one had been motivated by both environmental concerns and cost, having bought her nappies second-hand. The other had been primarily motivated by environmental concerns and not wanting to put plastic next to her baby's skin. However, when prompted further to consider what environmental factors might influence their nappy choices, regardless of whether they had tried reusables or not, the environmental motivations highlighted were primarily around the concern about how much landfill space would be taken up by a baby's worth of disposables. The environmental costs associated with nappy production were not mentioned. Several participants voiced the belief that some disposables were biodegradable but were

concerned over how long decomposition would take. Participants were not aware that most disposable nappies would in fact end up being incinerated rather than going to landfill. Notably, while cost savings motivated some participants who used cloth nappies, cost was also highlighted as a barrier to uptake of cloth nappies (as explored later in the report).

One of the current users of reusables was not in fact using nappies per se but washable potty training pants, and another participant also spoke about using reusables as a step towards potty training, as they allow the child to feel when they are wet (unlike the more absorbent design of many disposables which aim to provide a “dry feel” for comfort). It was widely agreed that promoting reusable nappies for use at this stage in a child’s development would be a positive step. Participants noted that by using cloth nappies to transition away from nappy use altogether might make potty training less ‘messy’, as accidents would be ‘contained’ better by the design of cloth nappies. Additionally, the use of washable and reusable cloth nappies throughout potty training was thought to reduce the likelihood of children’s clothes being soiled frequently and therefore needing to be washed or thrown away.

Interestingly, COVID-19 lockdowns were mentioned as a factor that may have facilitated people’s commitment to using reusables. Firstly, because people had more time to keep on top of the extra washing, and secondly because households were not being visited by friends/family members who might have questioned why reusables were being used;

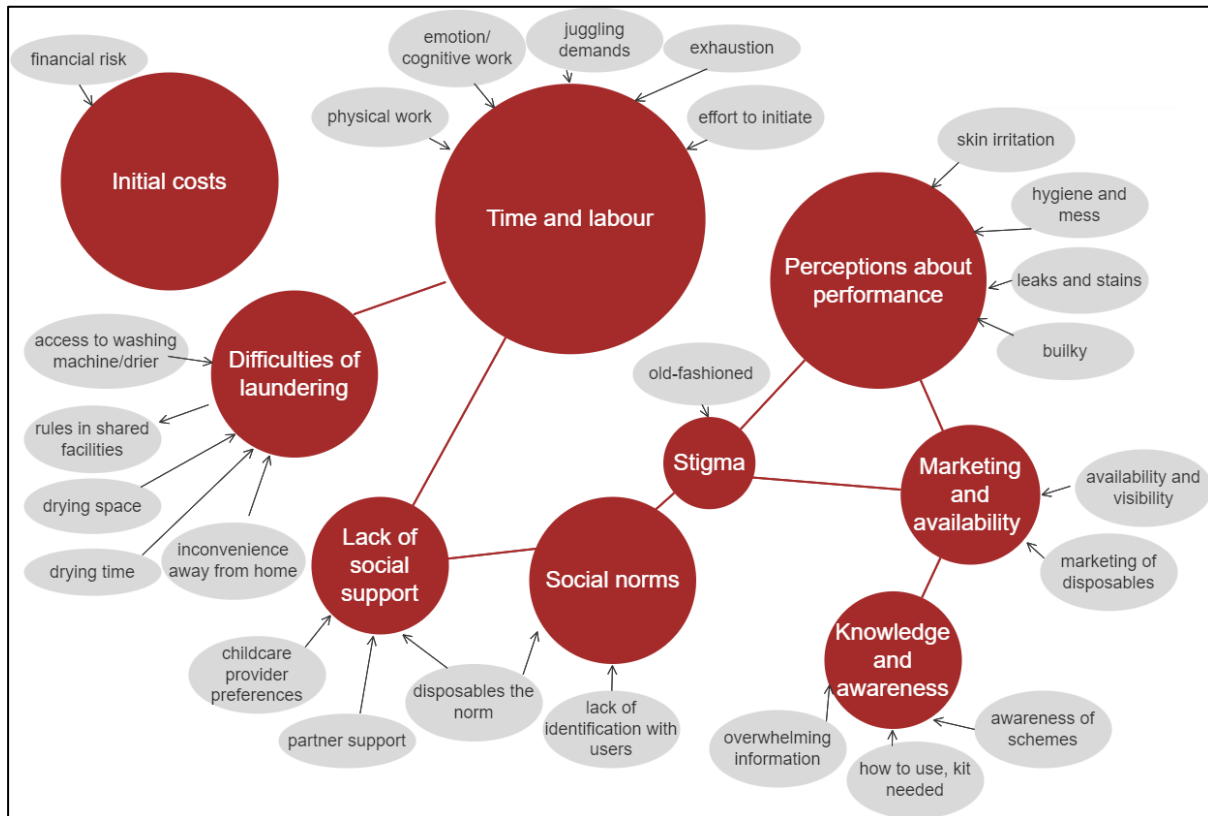
“I don’t think my mum had much dealings with me through that first year due to lockdown reasons... I think a lot of people would be saying why are you dealing with that? I think people would think that’s unhygienic, that’s just a faff, you’ve got enough to worry about” (Focus Group Participant).

The influence of family and friends appeared to be both a motivator and a potential barrier to reusable nappy use, if they are vocal about their negative perceptions of reusable nappies.

4.3 Existing evidence on barriers to uptake of reusable nappies

The review explored a wide range of material highlighting barriers to uptake of reusable nappies. Overall, there appears to be a well-established body of evidence on the wide range of barriers experienced, and they appear fairly consistent across studies and geographies represented within the review. There was no discernible change in the perceptions of barriers over the 20-year timeframe of the published literature reviewed. Figure 3 gives an overview of the barriers identified and some of the interconnections between these, with the following sections exploring these in more detail. Many of the factors that discourage parents from trying reusables are also reported as challenges experienced by those trying out or using reusables, although in some cases anticipated challenges did not match actual experience.

Figure 3: Barriers to uptake of reusable nappies. Bubbles sized to give indication of prominence in literature (not to scale)



4.3.1 Time and labour

Time and labour associated with reusable nappies is noted consistently as a major barrier to their uptake and would appear to be the greatest factor constraining their use (Miller et al., 2011; Pendry et al., 2012; Randles, 2022; Renkert & Filippone, 2023; Siemensma & Hunter, 2007). A number of studies explored the ‘care work’ associated with reusables, which includes not only the physical work of laundering nappies, but also a cognitive and emotional burden associated with planning schedules for washing and drying, tracking supplies, and remembering multiple components to pack when leaving the house (Pendry et al., 2012; Randles, 2022). Of particular concern is the gendered nature of this care work, with women shouldering a disproportionate amount of the burden (Randles, 2022). Whilst in a few cases, the time and labour involved in laundering is described using terms like ‘inconvenience’ or ‘hassle’, qualitative research highlights that it is not simply a case of reusables being somewhat less convenient than disposables. Rather, the extra demands can seem insurmountable for parents, particularly mothers, who are facing a ‘tightly calibrated juggling act’ (Randles, 2022) of caring and paid work responsibilities resulting in an existing experience of time pressure. At the same time, new parenthood is a time where many are already feeling exhausted and ‘worn out’ and may already be struggling to keep up with existing levels of laundry and other household tasks (Pendry et al., 2012). Even for those already comfortable with using reusable nappies, growing families mean more care work and busier

schedules that can act as a barrier. Some families who used reusables with a first child reported switching back to disposables for second and/or subsequent children for this reason (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005).

The literature also highlighted the time and effort expended to make the initial transition to reusable nappies. Getting started with reusables can seem like a 'daunting process' for parents who already feel too busy, involving having to get in touch with a local cloth nappy agent (Pendry et al., 2012), or spending time researching different options (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Siemensma & Hunter, 2007). As well as learning how to use reusables themselves, a parent driving the choice to use reusables may also find themselves having to teach other family members how to use them or taking on a greater share of nappy changing responsibilities (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012).

At the same time, however, established users argued that laundering cloth nappies does not involve as much time and hassle as people think (Miller et al., 2011; Pendry et al., 2012), echoed by participants in a reusable nappy trial scheme who reported feeling pleasantly surprised that reusables were easier than initially expected (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007). This suggests that once laundering of reusables becomes part of established routines, the extra work involved is often less challenging than anticipated.

4.3.2 Difficulties of laundering

In addition to the time and labour involved, the literature examines various practical challenges in laundering reusable nappies experienced or anticipated by parents. These include not having a washing machine and/or tumble drier at home (Randles, 2021, 2022; Renkert & Filippone, 2023; Sadler et al., 2018). For those relying on shared laundry facilities or laundrettes, concern about the extra costs and rules against laundering reusables may pose a further constraint (Barreca, 2023; Randles, 2021; Sadler et al., 2018). A lack of space for drying nappies and general concerns about being able to get nappies dry or the time taken to dry were also highlighted (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Kok, 2018; Pendry et al., 2012; Renkert & Filippone, 2023). Whilst space for drying is discussed more in relation to outdoor drying space in the literature, in the Scottish climate indoor space for drying during winter or in wet weather is also likely to pose a challenge.

Laundering can also pose practical problems when on holiday or staying away from home (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012). Many reusable nappy users overcome this by using disposables for convenience in these situations (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Environment Agency, 2005b).

4.3.3 High initial costs

Another key barrier to uptake of reusable nappies relates to the upfront financial costs (Miller et al., 2011; Pendry et al., 2012; Scottish Government et al., 2021; Thompson et al., 2011; Watson et al., 2023). Whilst using disposables can work out

more expensive in the long run (Defra, 2023), buying reusable nappies requires a more considerable initial investment. Part of the challenge of this for parents is that it may be seen as a risky investment, as there is a chance that money will be wasted if reusables are not felt to work for the family, or if the particular type or brand of reusable nappy purchased is not well suited (Pendry et al., 2012; Scottish Government et al., 2021).

Online communities (including those focused on resale of reusables) are mentioned in the literature as valued by existing users (Pendry et al., 2012), and literature on the impacts of reusables notes that acquiring reusables second hand can further reduce environmental impacts (Copello, 2021). However, the review did not find evidence on parents' attitudes to second hand cloth nappies or the potential for new users to reduce the initial costs through buying second hand kits.

4.3.4 Perceptions about performance and associated stigma

Several sources in the review highlighted negative perceptions about the performance of reusable nappies as a barrier to switching from disposables. These included viewing reusables as less hygienic, dirty or messy, less efficient/more likely to leak, or likely to stain (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Kok, 2018; Randles, 2022; Scottish Government, 2017a). Reports of actual performance of reusables was mixed. Some users or trial participants reported more leaks with reusables (Renkert & Filippone, 2023), however others experienced reusables as equally effective or better than disposables at preventing leaks (Pendry et al., 2012). Overnight leaks were mentioned by some (Renkert & Filippone, 2023), and some users/trial participants preferred to use disposables at night (Environment Agency, 2005b; Siemensma & Hunter, 2007).

Another common perception was that reusables were more likely to lead to skin irritation, through nappy rash or rubbing due to poor fit (Miller et al., 2011; Pendry et al., 2012; Randles, 2022; Renkert & Filippone, 2023). While some trial participants reported increased problems with rashes (Renkert & Filippone, 2023), other sources report no association between reusable nappies and incidence of nappy rash, with more frequent changing of reusables to ensure dryness (Geist & Bammer-Zimmer, 2023). As the review focused on attitudes, behaviour and experiences of parents, a review of the medical evidence on impacts of nappy choices on incidence of nappy rash was outwith the scope of this project.

Children's discomfort was reported as a challenge experienced by participants in a pilot project providing free cloth nappy kits; these included children feeling wet, removing their nappies, complaining about the bulkiness of the nappy (Renkert & Filippone, 2023). The relative bulkiness of reusables compared to disposables was also mentioned as offputting in a qualitative study of Scottish parents, who were unsure how well they would fit under baby clothes) (Scottish Government, 2017a).

Several sources highlight perceptions amongst parents that reusable nappies are outdated or old-fashioned (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Scottish Government, 2017a). Some of these perceptions could relate to a lack of awareness about the range of modern cloth nappies available and enduring images of reusable nappies as basic cloths secured with pins (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Randles, 2021). The issue of stigma associated with reusables was explored in depth in a recent US study which illustrates how strongly nappy practices are associated with care and the performance of good parenting (Randles, 2021, 2022). In this study, low-income mothers perceived that putting their child in reusables, which they associated with being leaky and smelly, would mark them as poor, reflect badly on their parenting and put them at greater risk of attracting the attention of social services. At the same time, reusables were simultaneously described as being a middle class privilege, highlighting how reusable nappies may be seen as both a symbol of poverty and affluence. The meanings associated with reusable and disposable nappies may be in part shaped by marketing and branding of disposables (explored in section 4.3.6).

4.3.5 Social systems, norms, and support

Perceptions of reusable nappies also link to social norms around their use. Disposable nappies are by far the most common nappy choice, and the fact that they are seen as the 'default' (Kok, 2018) and choice of the majority has a strong influence on those who are not highly motivated to diverge from this norm (e.g. for environmental reasons) (Pendry et al., 2012). As well as perceiving that disposables being the most popular choice must mean they are better (Pendry et al., 2012), this can also mean that most people do not have the opportunity to become familiar with reusables through friends and family using them (Scottish Government, 2017a). Disposables being the default choice, combined with high level of satisfaction with disposables' performance, can mean that most have no desire to change (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007).

The review highlighted that reusables can be seen as a niche choice adopted mainly within certain groups. Lack of identification with cloth nappy users, who may be perceived as 'hippy' or alternative (Pendry et al., 2012) can put off those who do not see themselves as fitting within that group. There is not enough evidence from the literature to comment on whether this perception is changing over time. Whilst bright colours and designs can be an appealing feature of reusables (Pendry et al., 2012), a study in North East England found that white nappies were more popular, with bright nappies seen as fitting with a 'hippy style' and offputting for some (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005).

Norms around use of disposables can also lead to a lack of social support for adopting reusables. In the absence of family and friends who use reusables, having access to social support in the form of formal and informal networks and trusted actors to advise is especially important (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Kok, 2018; Renkert & Filippone, 2023; Warner et al., 2017). Some sources argue that formal parental support systems such as health visiting and maternity services are biased towards

disposables, presenting them as the default and participating in their marketing through newborn 'Bounty' packs consisting of marketing material, samples, vouchers etc. (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Thompson et al., 2011). Social support within the household is also an important factor – a lack of support by partners is noted both as a barrier to uptake and a reason for switching back to disposables after previously using reusables (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Kok, 2018; Pendry et al., 2012).

4.3.6 Availability and marketing

Reusable nappies also can be at a disadvantage competing in a market dominated by long-established disposable nappy brands. The easy availability of disposable nappies at any supermarket or convenience store contrasts with that of reusables, which suffer from limited availability in physical shops and therefore less general visibility (Pendry et al., 2012). Purchasing of reusables often occurs online, which can limit those who do not have access or use the internet, or who do not know where to look to buy reusables online (Pendry et al., 2012). At the same time, disposables benefit from a long history of heavy marketing by leading brands, including targeted marketing to parents of newborns, resulting in strong brand images and a high level of trust and consumer loyalty (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Buckingham & Kulcur, 2009; Pendry et al., 2012; Randles, 2021; Thompson et al., 2011). The relative absence of marketing of reusables, including lack of vouchers and incentives targeting new parents, along with lack of awareness of available schemes is argued to constrain uptake of reusables (Pendry et al., 2012).

4.3.7 Knowledge and awareness

Another important barrier to uptake highlighted in the review relates to knowledge and awareness around reusable nappies. This includes general lack of awareness about reusables and how modern cloth nappies have evolved (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Kok, 2018), uncertainty about how to use reusable nappies, what components and how many nappies would be needed for a full kit (Scottish Government, 2017a), and lack of awareness of schemes supporting reusable nappy uptake (Pendry et al., 2012; Salhofer et al., 2008).

Rather than reporting a lack of information on reusables, the literature highlighted that parents may feel that there is an overwhelming amount of complex information available (Kok, 2018). At the same time, this information may not reach those that do not actively seek to research reusable nappies (Kok, 2018). Several sources discuss the main information sources relied on with respect to reusable nappies, with friends and family highlighted as most important (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012; Warner et al., 2015) and word of mouth as a key vehicle by which users are introduced to reusable nappies (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005). The internet, peer networks and user communities, local councils, and private sector actors like nappy reps can also form important trusted sources of information (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005; Pendry et al., 2012; Warner et al., 2018).

4.4 Insights into barriers from focus groups

As mentioned earlier, many of the focus group participants who had experience with cloth nappies did not maintain their use long term. Additionally, the participants that solely used disposable nappies had many reservations about cloth nappies which deterred participants from attempting to try the alternative temporarily. A number of barriers to uptake and sustained use were highlighted throughout the focus group discussions, with participants generally stating that disposable nappies continue to be the default and that there is much work to be done in order to enable and mainstream the use of cloth nappies. Suggestions from participants on interventions to encourage the uptake of reusable nappies are noted later in the report (section 5.3).

Box 3: barriers to reusable nappy uptake identified in focus groups

- Lack of awareness about cloth nappies and how to use them
- Lack of visibility of cloth nappies in supermarkets
- Overwhelming amount of parental responsibilities (new parents, single parents, parents with multiple children)
- Social perceptions (unnecessary hassle, unhygienic)
- Time & effort required for laundering
- Large upfront cost (cloth) compared to small regular purchases (disposable)
- Energy costs of laundering nappies
- Hygiene concerns (cleanliness of reusing nappies on young children)
- Hygiene concerns (storing and washing soiled nappies not appealing)

4.4.1 Knowledge and awareness

It was made apparent that a key factor in the low uptake of reusable nappies is that they are simply not on most expectant parents' radar. The majority of our participants had given little, if any, thought to nappy choices at all throughout the course of the pregnancy. This was because nappies were perceived as something that needed little thought: when a newborn arrives, they would need nappies, and these could be bought as and when needed. Unlike disposable nappies, which are well advertised and are on every supermarket and drugstore shelf, many participants highlighted that they did not know what a cloth or reusable nappy looked like. When reflecting on the points made by individuals with experience using reusables, those that had only ever used disposables mentioned that they did not know what other participants meant by 'liners' when talking about the different parts of a modern cloth nappy. Participants with no experience using cloth nappies were unsure about how many cloth nappies would be required as well as the appropriate way to use and clean the cloth nappies properly.

There was a general feeling that there is not enough information available or offered to expectant parents on reusables nappies. Notably, only one participant had used the voucher included in the Scottish Baby Box to claim a free cloth nappy starter set. None of the remaining focus group participants were aware that there was a voucher for reusable nappies included in the baby box. Participants felt that the inclusion of a voucher, particularly amidst a whole host of other leaflets and papers in the baby box, was insufficient as the sole prompt for encouraging expectant parents to try reusable nappies. It was asserted that unless expectant parents had close friends or relatives that supported the use of cloth nappies based on their own experiences, it was unlikely that reusable nappies would be thought of as an alternative to disposable nappies. Additionally, when reflecting on their experiences throughout the course of the pregnancy, all participants recounted that there was no mention of reusable nappies by healthcare professionals such as midwives, nor any visibility of reusable nappies in healthcare spaces such as posters in waiting rooms or samples in maternity wards.

Participants noted a lack of external messaging on cloth nappies and there was a general consensus that there were rarely any online or television advertisements for cloth nappies. While two participants had seen reusable nappies available from large mainstream stores such as Boots and Lidl, the majority of the focus group participants highlighted the lack of visibility of reusables in supermarkets as a barrier to uptake, as many people purchase nappies as part of their regular shop. Participants made a variety of suggestions on how to improve the messaging and awareness about reusables, as noted later in the report (section 5.3).

4.4.2 Cost

As mentioned earlier, cost was cited by participants as both a motivator and a barrier to the uptake of reusable nappies. The initial outlay for a set of reusable nappies was mentioned as a potential barrier, although since many of our participants had simply not considered purchasing reusables this was not a major topic of discussion. For example, when prompted to discuss their thoughts on the purchase of a set of reusable nappies and liners in advance of their child being born, compared to their regular disposable nappy purchasing decisions, one participant explained:

“I do remember looking at them and thinking they were quite expensive for something that you might end up then actually throwing out. And I didn't know how many you would need. How many do you need to have a supply of nappies for a few days...Do you need 20, 30, 40? And if each nappy is a tenner that's like hundreds of pounds. Which you probably are going to spend more than that over the course of your child's nappy time, but to then buy that all in one go? If somebody said to you, you can buy all of these nappies but it's going to cost you £300, you're not going to do that when you could buy a packet of nappies for a fiver every so often, every other day or every few days.” (Focus Group Participant)

Additionally, given the current cost of living crisis and the high energy costs, there was a common perception among participants that it would be cheaper to buy disposables overall rather than regularly washing and drying cloth nappies. The majority of participants with experience using cloth nappies were air-drying their nappies, and so perceived environmental and financial costs were less around the tumble drying of nappies and more around the fact that the central heating might need to be on more in order to dry nappies when the weather was not favourable. One participant did use the tumble-dryer to 'finish off' the thicker inserts to ensure that they were completely dry.

4.4.3 Time, labour & hygiene

Related to the perceived costs of laundering cloth nappies, participants suggested that reusable nappies seemed like more work than disposables. A number of participants asserted that they simply would not have the time to add the related steps necessary to use and launder cloth nappies to their already busy schedule with a newborn, and that doing so might add additional stress to their lives as parents.

This was supported by one participant's experience; this was the sole participant who had used the baby box voucher, and did try the reusables briefly, but reported becoming overwhelmed and unable to keep up with the washing. Another participant reflected on the perceived added labour of cloth nappies, stating that "it sounds selfish because you're trying to do something out of easiness and convenience for you, whereas it probably is comfier for the child to have a cloth nappy on" (Focus Group Participant). Furthermore, in contrast to the 'stay factors' identified by Pendry et al. (2012), focus group participants who had used reusables with their first child seldom used them with their second or third, citing the convenience of disposables and having more to do in general with multiple children to care for as reasons (as found by Askins and Bulkeley 2005). Across the focus groups reusable nappies were generally viewed as less hygienic than disposables, especially under particularly messy instances with young children:

"there are some times when my kids have done a poonami, if you want to call it, and I would put the clothes in the bin. So then am I going to be putting reusable nappies in the bin rather than washing them? Because sometimes the clothes couldn't even be saved" (Focus Group Participant).

Dealing with faeces itself was seen as a barrier, and even amongst users of cloth nappies some had adopted the habit of switching to a disposable when they expected the child to soil the nappy with faeces rather than urine alone. Some participants went as far as to state that a cloth nappy becomes "disposable" when soiled by faeces. Additionally, participants were concerned that they would not be able to get the nappies clean enough after use and did not want to put potentially unclean cloth nappies on their children. This hygiene concern extended towards the washing machine and the feeling that washing nappies at home "made a mess of the machine".

Hygiene concerns were also highlighted in the discussions around second-hand reusable nappies as a means to minimising the high initial financial cost of reusables. There was little appetite for buying second hand nappies (although one participant had done this), with many participants expressing disgust at the thought of using another child's nappies on their own. As one participant explained:

"I don't know if I would want to use a second-hand nappy... Obviously these other children have done the toilet in that and I just don't know if I would want to put that on my child".

Other participants agreed with this sentiment and stated that if a second-hand nappy had a stain on it, they would consider simply throwing it away. The participants were introduced to the idea of nappy libraries and nappy laundering services in response to these concerns about hygiene and labour, however as explained later in the report these services had mixed response perhaps because participants were hypothetically willing to have their reusable nappies passed on to others as second-hand nappies, but were generally not willing to use second-hand or 'used' nappies themselves.

5 Findings: Interventions to support use of reusable nappies

This section of the report examines existing evidence on schemes or interventions intended to support uptake of reusable nappies. This draws on evidence from the academic and grey literature reviewing, the desk-based investigation of schemes in Scotland, and focus group discussions with parents.

5.1 Overview of types of schemes to support use of reusable nappies

Based on the rapid evidence assessment, we identified the following categories of schemes to support reusable nappy uptake:

- Nappy libraries
- Reusable nappy kit provision
- Voucher schemes
- Cashback or grant schemes
- Nappy laundry services
- Provision of reusable nappies on maternity wards
- Other (including events, campaigns and information resources)

These different types of scheme are discussed in detail in section 5.2. Where schemes were mentioned in the literature, this was often relating to speculation on the potential for schemes to address identified barriers, or case studies providing descriptions of schemes only. The 13 sources providing some evaluation of schemes are summarised in Appendix C, with several sources pertaining to the same scheme. There were few examples of robust evaluation of scheme impacts. The quality of evidence from the studies was limited by:

- Lack of insight into behavioural outcomes in scheme evaluations, beyond broad headline figures on uptake (e.g. number of vouchers redeemed, number of kits supplied). This means it was often not possible to identify the extent to which parents who redeemed a voucher or requested a nappy kit switched to reusables after having tried them out initially.
- General lack of evidence on the added value of schemes in stimulating adoption of reusables beyond those that would have used reusables in the absence of the scheme. Whilst a few studies adopted experimental or quasi-experimental methods to compare outcomes in trial groups to control groups most studies did not. At the same time, scheme participants were largely self-selected.
- Absence of follow-up on long-term behavioural maintenance. Those studies that did explore behavioural changes among participants were short-term time limited studies, limiting understanding of how changes may or may not have persisted in the long-term.
- Few of the sources evaluating schemes reported economic, environmental or social impacts. In the cases where economic and environmental impacts

were estimated the assumptions upon which these were based were not always clear.

5.1.1 Interventions operating in Scotland

The desk-based activity collating information on schemes in Scotland identified 20 schemes operating at a local or regional level. These are detailed in Appendix D. Some of the evidence available is more than five/ten years old and so it was not always clear whether the schemes are still active. Other active schemes and activity promoting the use of reusable nappies may also exist across Scotland, but further research is required to determine the scale of this. The majority (16 out of 20) of the schemes identified were nappy libraries. Nappy libraries allow parents to hire reusable nappies usually for a small price, to try out different types of reusable nappies before buying them upfront. Usually, nappy kits can be rented through messaging the Facebook group or emailing the nappy library and then are collected or can also be delivered in some communities with some offering courier services. Reusable nappy kit provision schemes (2), and cashback or grant schemes (3) were also identified. It is noted that one of the initiatives operated multiple scheme types. The majority of nappy libraries appear to be run by volunteer-based community groups, with other schemes operated by local authorities and charities. We found limited evidence evaluating the impacts of these schemes.

5.2 Evidence on scheme types and their impacts

In this section we outline evidence from the international literature on the impacts of reusable nappy schemes falling under the categories set out above in section 5.1. Additionally, insights from the focus groups on parents' attitudes to and awareness of such schemes in Scotland are noted.

5.2.1 Nappy libraries

Nappy libraries offer families the opportunity to borrow reusable nappies/nappy kits or hire for a small fee. This allows families to gain hands on experience of reusables before committing the upfront costs to buy their own kit, and to try out different types and brands to see what might best for them and their babies. Nappy libraries were the most common scheme identified in our mapping activity of interventions operating in Scotland, and are mentioned in the literature as an intervention that reusable nappy users report having found useful in supporting their own positive attitude to reusable nappies (Watson et al., 2023). Despite this, the evidence review found almost no published evidence on the impact of nappy library schemes. Kok's (2018) evaluation of a pilot scheme ran across three Dutch municipalities included only a very small number of participants (3) who took part in a nappy leasing scheme. In a wider survey as part of the same study, leasing or renting was very unpopular with respondents – 'nearly all' of the more than 100 respondents who used disposables stated a perception that leasing or renting would be unhygienic (Kok, 2018).

Insights from focus groups – nappy libraries:

None of the focus group participants had heard of nappy libraries, but they were broadly supportive of the idea. This was particularly the case in comparison to nappy laundering services (see section X below), but also as a favourable alternative to the high upfront costs of purchasing reusable nappies.

5.2.2 Free reusable nappy kit provision

The evidence review highlighted a number of schemes focusing on the provision of free reusable nappy kits to families. One source highlighted North Ayrshire Council's Birth to Potty Scheme, reported to be the first scheme in the UK to provide free reusable nappy packs from birth to potty, launched in October 2019. Parents can request a trial pack of reusable nappies, and can then choose to progress to a free birth to potty pack (see Appendix C for more details of contents). The Council reported that the scheme has been used by >200 families and is estimated to save families up to £1300 per child (North Ayrshire Council, n.d.). No evidence on the behaviour of families after having accessed the scheme, or that would allow quantification of the uptake of reusables attributable to the scheme itself was available.

Other examples of nappy kit provision schemes in the literature tended to engage smaller groups of participants in trials or pilot projects, involving follow up with participants to understand the impact of accessing a nappy kit on subsequent use of reusables. The results of these projects, conducted in the USA (Renkert & Filippone, 2023), Australia (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007) and the Netherlands (Kok, 2018) are shown in Appendix C. Overall these studies showed that the majority of participants reported continuing to use reusables for the full length of the trial period (the duration of which was not always reported) and intended to continue using them. Across these studies, those who continued to use reusables tended to do so in combination with disposables, rather than exclusively relying on reusables. Together the studies suggest that free reusable nappy kit provision can be an effective intervention to promote uptake of reusable nappies, however the findings of the studies are generally limited by a lack of follow-up beyond the trial period, self-selection of participants onto projects, as well as a lack of assessment against appropriate control or comparator groups. Assessment of overall economic, environmental and social benefits was variable across the studies. Positive impacts highlighted were cost savings by families (Renkert & Filippone, 2023). Negative impacts noted included higher water use (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007), greater time spent on nappy care work (Renkert & Filippone, 2023; Siemensma & Hunter, 2007), more nappy rashes (Renkert & Filippone, 2023), and leaks (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007).

Whilst not evaluating impacts of a scheme per se, it is worth highlighting that in Scotland it was originally proposed that the Baby Box scheme included a single free reusable nappy, rather than a voucher as is currently included. Focus group testing of this proposal indicated that parents did not appreciate the inclusion of the reusable nappy (Scottish Government, 2017a) and a subsequent pilot in which 160 boxes

were distributed and feedback sought from parents found that these were seen as a wasted item that should not be included (Scottish Government, 2017c).

5.2.3 Voucher schemes

Voucher schemes offer parents the opportunity to save money on purchases of reusable nappies. Overviews of good practice in reducing disposable nappy waste in Europe highlight that in the UK more than 70 local authorities offer economic incentives including voucher schemes, examples of voucher and money off schemes operating in Italy and Spain are also given (Arnold et al., 2023; Copello, 2021).

Evaluations of the Real Nappies for London scheme (Warner et al., 2015, 2017, 2018), introduced in 2007, offers insight into the potential impacts of such schemes. In this scheme, registered residents of participating London boroughs are able to request a voucher towards the costs of reusable nappies. Between 2007 and 2016 13,845 vouchers were issued, around three-quarters of which were redeemed. Estimations of the impact of the scheme across this time period suggested that the scheme was extremely cost effective, with local authority cost savings for waste disposal estimated to total more than 10 times the cost of administering the scheme. Over the course of 2007-2017, it was estimated that the scheme prevented 10,903 tonnes of disposable nappy waste. Impact estimations assumed that parents redeeming vouchers used reusable nappies from birth to toilet training at 2.5 years, in combination with disposable nappies, resulting in an average saving of 4.7 disposable nappies per day over this period (Warner et al., 2015). No monitoring of behaviour after redeeming the voucher was conducted to ascertain whether families redeeming the voucher continued to use reusables in the long-term, so estimations of impact may have inflated actual environmental and economic savings to local authorities.

Evaluation of Scotland's Baby Box scheme (Scottish Government, 2017b; Scottish Government et al., 2021) included investigation of the attitudes of parents and healthcare professionals regarding the inclusion of specific items in the box, including a reusable nappy voucher for one reusable nappy wrap and five washable nappy pads. Earlier prototype versions of the baby box included a free reusable nappy in the contents, which was removed in response to early pilot evaluations (Scottish Government, 2017a, 2017c). Further research on the baby box indicated an appetite for inclusion of a voucher towards reusable nappies, and this was introduced in 2019. A 2021 evaluation of the Baby Box scheme indicated that midwives and health visitors perceived the voucher to be the least useful item included, although this view was not matched by parents' perceptions. Some parents on lower incomes appreciated the voucher as without it they would not have had the opportunity to try reusables (Scottish Government et al., 2021). Information given in response to a parliamentary question in 2022¹ indicated that between June 2019 and

¹ Question reference S6W-08624. [Scottish Parliament webpage - response to a Minister of Scottish Parliament question on nappies](#)

April 2022, a total of 19,258 reusable nappy vouchers were redeemed, with a cumulative saving of over £249,000 for families. It is also stated that families who use the voucher were offered a discounted package if they wished to continue using reusables, with 224 families (from June 2020 to April 2022) using this discount.

Overall, there is a need for more evidence on the effectiveness of reusable nappy vouchers, particularly regarding the adoption of reusable nappies in the long term by those who redeem vouchers, and investigation into the extent to which voucher schemes provide an incentive for uptake by those who would not have considered reusables otherwise.

Insights from focus groups – voucher schemes:

In our focus groups, only one participant had been motivated to try reusable nappies as a result of the voucher in the Baby Box. Some participants did not recall having seen a voucher in the Baby Box, and others had dismissed it, either because they were not interested in trying reusables, or because it involved actively sending away for the supplies.

5.2.4 Cashback or grant schemes

Similar to voucher schemes, a number of examples of cashback, grant or other subsidy schemes to encourage reusable nappy use were mentioned in the literature. These included examples of cashback schemes in London (Warner et al., 2015), other local authority areas in England including Derbyshire, Milton Keynes and Leeds (Copello, 2021), Belgium (Arnold et al., 2023; Copello, 2021), Austria (Salhofer et al., 2008) as well as in Scotland (Inverclyde council & Barnes, 2009). In Scotland, the Inverclyde Real Nappy Campaign offered an £80 incentive to use reusables, with uptake by 23 families in 2008-2009 (Inverclyde council & Barnes, 2009). Salhofer et al. (2008) reported overall low uptake of subsidy schemes in Austria, ranging from 1.4% to 3.3% depending on region, with higher uptake (up to 10.5%) in some communities. No evidence on the economic, social and environmental impacts of cashback, grant or other subsidy schemes was found.

5.2.5 Nappy laundry services

Commercial nappy laundries provide users with freshly laundered reusable nappies. Once used, nappies are returned for laundering. This type of nappy product service system (where users purchase the service, rather than owning their own nappies) is discussed as offering a potential advantage of more energy efficient laundering (United Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021), however the recent UK-based nappy life cycle assessment commissioned by Defra (2023) did not analyse potential gains due to the fact that use of laundry services is not common practice. Others note that laundry services may have the potential to help overcome the barriers to do with time and labour in particular (Pendry et al., 2012; Short & Harvey, 2008), however costs of commercial services may be prohibitive or off-putting (Pendry et al., 2012; Plotka-Wasylyka et al., 2022). Some authors argue for incentivisation and subsidisation of laundry services (Pendry et al., 2012; United

Nations Environment Programme et al., 2021) due to these potential advantages. Nappy laundry services operating as social enterprises can also offer the potential for positive social impacts through supporting people into employment (Delgadillo et al., 2021).

Husaini et al. (2007), in a review of case study waste reduction schemes, profiled the West Sussex Real Nappy Initiative, a scheme providing free laundry services to families (see Appendix C) was assessed as 'good' in terms of effectiveness. Five hundred families participated in 1999-2000, with an estimated cost saving of around £20,000 for the local authority due to reduced waste management costs associated with the 8000 tonnes of disposable nappies (1600 kg/family/year) that were estimated to have been avoided. No information was available on the methodology or assumptions used to estimate these impacts.

Uzzell & Leach (2003) trialled a free laundry service, in combination with an intervention in a maternity unit in England (see also section 5.2.6 below). Uptake of the 6-week home laundry trial was higher amongst those that experienced reusable nappies on the maternity ward, and those motivated to reduce waste through their nappy choices. While parents who already intended to use reusable nappies were more likely to agree to take part in the scheme, the majority of scheme participants had originally intended to use disposables.

Of the 44 parents who took part in the home trial and returned a questionnaire 6 weeks later, more than half had continued to use the laundry service for the full length of the trial, with 5 using exclusively reusables during the trial period. At the end of the trial, 20 of the 44 participants intended to continue to use reusables, around half of which had originally planned to use disposables with their baby. Intentions to continue to use reusables was higher amongst participants who had also had reusables available to them in the maternity ward, compared to the control group. Reasons for not continuing at the end of the free trial included smells from the nappy bin (collected weekly) and costs of continuing the laundry service, as well as challenges of using reusables in general (e.g. time and convenience, nappy performance issues).

Overall the evidence suggests that free nappy laundry service schemes have the potential to encourage use of reusable nappies, but more research is required on the cost effectiveness, environmental and social impacts of such schemes and different models for their operation.

Insights from focus groups – nappy laundry services:

None of the focus group participants had either used, or even heard of, nappy laundering services. When we explored how participants felt about potentially using a nappy laundering service there was a generally negative reaction, with participants voicing major hygiene concerns and disliking the idea of not receiving their baby's 'own' nappies back. They were concerned about where they might store a week's worth of dirty nappies (with one participant commenting that they wouldn't ever have a dirty disposable in their inside bin, let alone a week's worth of used cloth nappies waiting to be picked up), about the house smelling, and expressed feeling that they might have to do a 'pre-clean' of the nappies (analogous to the 'clean the house before the cleaner comes' mentality). One participant raised concerns about the environmental impact of having delivery vans driving to and from multiple households, picking up and dropping off nappies. With respect to the cost of such a service, another participant commented that eventually the cost might encourage one to start laundering them at home. A possible underlying reason to such strongly negative reactions to the concept of nappy laundering services is stigma and lack of control over the condition of the nappies that would be delivered.

"I think it's just a stigma. I think most folk, certainly for younger children especially, you are very – you want to wrap them in cotton wool, and it's not somebody else's dirty cotton wool you want it to be." (Focus group participant).

5.2.6 Provision of reusable nappies in maternity wards

As noted above in section 5.2.5, Uzzell & Leach (2003) evaluated the impact of providing reusable nappies in a maternity unit, so that new parents were freely able to use these during their stay following the birth of their baby, or they could use disposables they supplied themselves. Previous to this, the policy had required parents to supply their own disposables. Groups of parents staying on the ward before and after the policy change were compared. The research found that no significant difference in eventual nappy choices between the before and after groups, although interviews with those in the after group indicated that these parents were more open to trying reusable nappies. Issues with training of staff on the ward to use reusables were noted, which may have impacted on the effectiveness of the scheme.

Insights from focus groups – provision on maternity wards:

Participants in our focus groups suggested that provision of reusable nappies in maternity wards would be a good way of increasing awareness and experience of them, and that confidence in trying them out at home might be boosted through having tried them in the hospital first.

5.2.7 Other types of reusable nappy interventions

Other types of reusable nappy interventions highlighted in the evidence review included real nappy events and campaigns (Sharp et al., 2010), 'nappucino' events for reusable nappy users (Pendry et al., 2012), partnerships between local

authorities and independent private sector reusable nappy agents in promotions and social support for users (Askins & Bulkeley, 2005), online communities and social media groups (Watson et al., 2023), and website information interventions (Miller et al., 2011). While there is a lack of evidence on the impact of such interventions on adoption of reusable nappies, the literature discussing such interventions highlights the importance of social support and trusted actors in promoting reusable nappy use.

5.3 Parents' recommendations for interventions

One of the key findings from the focus groups was that using disposables rather than reusables was often not an explicit, considered choice. It was simply that reusable nappies were not on participants' radar when they were expecting their babies, and so disposables were automatically bought and used when the babies were born. In recognising this, the participants generated ideas for how the profile of reusable nappies could be raised, and how and where more information/support on using them could be provided.

There was general agreement that currently information on reusables nappies is something that has to be actively sought. Disposable nappies are advertised heavily on television and dominate in the supermarkets. Although Boots does sell a few different reusable nappies in its stores, these are placed on the top shelf or, as one participant highlighted, are often out-of-stock online. Aldi and Lidl occasionally sell them in their middle aisles, but this presence is not consistent. Although there are multiple makes and types of reusable nappies available online, this information requires time and effort to sift through in order to make an informed decision on which brand to purchase.

But before that stage is reached, it is important to increase visibility and awareness of reusable nappies through multiple points of contact during pregnancy and beyond. Some ideas generated within the focus groups include:

- Posters/information at the doctor's surgery/waiting for antenatal scans. Early on in pregnancy would be best, as reusable nappies require more active research than disposables, and the intention to use reusables is often a decision that requires consultation and discussion with a partner.
- Information about reusable nappies in the NHS's 'Ready Steady Baby' / other pamphlets/booklets about pregnancy, childbirth and raising babies. Information sources should include tips on how to use, how to clean, how many one is likely to need.
- Demonstration/information at antenatal classes. At least one focus group participant had never seen a reusable nappy and had no frame of reference for the terminology that goes along with their use e.g. liner, insert, wrap. Since antenatal classes demonstrate disposable nappies, it was felt that they could also demonstrate reusables.
- Information/advice from midwife/health visitor, and not just pre-birth or in the early weeks. As some of the focus group participants had used reusables at

the potty-training stage, it was felt that this was something that could be more broadly encouraged, that reusable nappies could be promoted for different stages within the overall birth-to-potty stage. Also seen as important was the promotion of the idea that even using reusables for some of the time is better than using them for none of the time.

- Inclusion of an actual reusable nappy in the baby box, rather than the voucher.
- Reusables as an option in the maternity ward. Many maternity wards have spare nappies available under the cot. Focus group participants felt having reusables as an option would encourage them to give them a go.
- TV adverts particularly endorsed by The Scottish Government (seen as a reliable source), possibly combined with more information on what currently happens to disposables nappies, tackling both the perception that disposables are biodegradable, and that nappies end up in landfill. Focus group participants thought that presenting actual statistics on carbon savings with relatable examples would be valuable.
- Adverts/information on social media/TikTok/YouTube would be appreciated (while recognising that the algorithms of some of these platforms might mean that not everyone would see the adverts).
- Greater presence of reusables in supermarkets, next to disposables (and not just on the top or bottom shelf).

5.4 Data to support future evaluations of scheme impacts in Scotland

The limited evidence on the economic, environmental and social impacts of reusable nappy schemes, both in Scotland and in the international academic and grey literature, points to a need for more robust evaluation. Evaluations should ideally measure impacts on behaviour, rather than just scheme participation numbers, including long-term maintenance of use of reusables and the extent to which reusables are used in combination with disposables. Critically, evaluations should consider ways in which to assess the extent to which schemes have encouraged uptake of reusables over and above those who would have chosen to use them in the absence of the scheme (e.g. through the use of control or comparator groups).

More accurate data on the behavioural impacts of schemes could help to ground models estimating their economic and environmental impacts, particularly given that evidence from Life Cycle Assessments emphasises that the impact of reusables versus disposables depends heavily how they are laundered, which may be subject to variation due to climate, weather and energy costs. At the same time, the environmental impact associated with laundering reusables could depend highly on the grid energy mix (Sandison et al., 2023). Although Defra's (2023) LCA offers a useful data to ground calculations of scheme impacts, Scotland-specific assessments of impacts of reusables, taking into account the energy mix and context-specific assumptions about laundering could improve estimations of impacts of reusable nappy schemes in the future. Economic assessments should also strive to incorporate up-to-date data on costs to local authorities associated with managing waste from disposable nappies.

6 Synthesis and recommendations

This section summarises the key findings and conclusions, bringing together the insights from the evidence review and focus groups and proposing recommendations for future action to support adoption of reusable nappies.

6.1 Key motivations and barriers impacting on uptake of reusable nappies

The research highlighted, that whilst there are a range of motivations and barriers that feature in decision-making on whether or not to use reusables, perhaps the main challenge to wider adoption of reusables at present is the fact that disposables are now seen as a 'default' to the extent that many parents do not even consider that there is a choice to be made – it is simply not on their radar. This came through particularly strongly in focus groups with parents resident in Scotland. Strong social norms favouring use of disposables are compounded by their wide availability and history of marketing. Some evidence suggests that norms might be changing somewhat in particular social groups, however more research is needed to explore the extent to which this applies in Scotland.

Where explicit motivations for adopting reusable nappies are explored in the literature, environmental concern emerges as the primary motivation. Cost savings and concerns about chemicals in disposable nappies are also highlighted as key drivers. These motivators were reflected in our focus groups, however cost savings featured more strongly than environmental concerns amongst the reusable nappy users who participated. This may speak to the impacts of the current cost of living crisis on household finances.

The barriers to uptake of reusables, as highlighted in the evidence review, are numerous and highly interconnected. The extra time and work associated with reusable nappies (in washing and drying, planning and researching) feature strongly amongst the reasons why many find the idea of reusables unattractive. This is compounded by the pressures of new parenthood and the time poverty commonly experienced by parents of young children, especially as families grow. Initial costs of reusable nappies and perceptions about their performance (including hygiene aspects) relative to disposables are also frequently mentioned as barriers. Disgust associated with the idea of putting soiled nappies in the washing machine, and storing soiled nappies until they are washed came through strongly in focus groups. The focus groups also highlighted costs of laundering as a key concern as it was felt that drying reusable nappies indoors would mean having to put the heating on more, incurring greater energy bills. For this reason, participants were not convinced that reusables would be more cost-effective than disposables.

The focus groups highlighted that support from parents, family and friends as well as partners motivated participants to use cloth nappies, and conversely a lack of support acted as a barrier. Nappy choices were described as a joint decision with

partners, or the decision of the person that assumes most of the childcare responsibility. Choosing reusable nappies was viewed as an active decision that must be considered far in advance of the baby being born, in order to prepare for use (knowing how to use, clean, and having them ready as soon as baby arrives). The importance of social support was also highlighted in the evidence review, with family and friends paramount. In the absence of support from family and friends, wider networks of trusted actors and peers were also highlighted.

6.2 Interventions to support use of reusable nappies

The evidence review highlighted a range of different types of schemes to support the adoption of reusable nappies. These included: nappy libraries, reusable nappy kit provision, voucher schemes, cashback or grant schemes, nappy laundry services, provision of reusable nappies on maternity wards, and other interventions including events, campaigns and information resources. The evidence base on the impact of these schemes is underdeveloped – we found only 13 studies in the academic and grey literature which provided evaluation evidence on schemes. Studies often suffered from poor quality research designs or lack of necessary information provided to judge the accuracy of reported impacts.

Due to the significant gaps in the evidence base on schemes to support uptake of reusable nappies, it is not possible to draw clear conclusions about which types of schemes are likely to be most effective. There were, however, indications from the literature that nappy laundry services, reusable nappy kit provision and voucher schemes may offer potentially promising results, however more research is required. Our focus groups highlighted that some types of schemes are favoured by parents over others. In particular, nappy laundry services were generally seen as unappealing due to the fact that parents did not like the idea of putting their baby in nappies that had been worn by another.

A separate mapping of schemes operating in Scotland found information on 18 schemes operating at the local or regional level, in addition to the national-level Baby Box reusable nappy voucher. The majority of schemes identified were nappy libraries, primarily run by third sector and community organisations. A small number of reusable nappy kit provision schemes and cashback/grant schemes, operated by or in partnership with local authorities were also identified. Limited evidence on the impact of schemes was available.

6.3 Equity, diversity and inclusion considerations

The evidence review and focus groups highlighted a number of points which should be taken into consideration when assessing the potential impacts of any future policy actions on different sectors of the population. Box 4 below details these considerations in relation to income, gender, rurality and ethnicity. In addition to considering the impacts of groups on these single dimensions, it is also important to note that these dimensions may interact, resulting in intersectional equality impacts

i.e. inequalities experienced specifically by individuals at the intersections of two or more marginalised groups.

Box 4: Key equity, diversity and inclusion considerations for reusable nappy policies

Population group (1)

Low-income

Equality impact considerations

- The high initial costs of purchasing reusable nappies, and ongoing costs of laundering and drying are a barrier to their use. Costs for paid services (e.g. nappy laundries) may be prohibitive.
- Free or affordable provision of reusable nappies has the potential to reduce overall costs of nappies for low-income families and reduce the stress associated with 'nappy need'.
- At the same time, low-income parents can experience increased barriers to adopting reusable nappies, beyond those related to costs. These can include time poverty as a result of e.g. working long hours/multiple jobs, increased pressures on single parents and parents with disabled children, and increased stigma around use of reusables. The complex interplay of barriers may limit adoption of reusables even where cost barriers are addressed.

Population group (2)

Women

Equality impact considerations

- Cost savings associated with reusable nappies do not take into account the costs of unpaid labour associated with laundering, planning and researching reusables. This labour is disproportionately performed by women.
- Attitudes to reusables vs. disposables are highly entwined with notions around quality of care. This can lead to emotionally laden responses to the nappy debate (e.g. shame, guilt, anger, pride), which due to gender roles around caring may be felt strongly by mothers in particular.
- Promotion of reusable nappies should be sensitive to these gendered aspects of nappy 'care work', considering potential impacts to women's wellbeing, particularly in relation to the pressures of new motherhood and time constraints on mothers balancing parenting with other paid or unpaid work responsibilities.

Population group (3)

Rural Residents

Equality impact considerations

- Rural residents are likely to experience less access to schemes and in-person reusable nappy user events etc. Some types of nappy schemes, such as nappy laundries, may be more challenging or less cost-effective to operate in rural areas.
- Distributed networks of volunteers and postal services (as seen in the example of the Highland Nappy Network, Appendix D) may help increase access for rural families.

Population group (4)

Ethnic Minorities

Equality impact considerations

- Literature from the USA highlights how intersectional inequalities experienced by low-income parents of ethnic minority backgrounds can increase stigma associated with reusable nappies and the potential role that nappy choices may play as markers of care.

6.4 Recommendations

In this final section we propose actions to aid future policy development on reusable nappies and to encourage and support an increase in the use of reusable nappies in Scotland. Some of these recommendations relate specifically to actions that could be taken by the Scottish Government. Several would also require action on the part of other actors including health service providers, retailers, media, campaigners and scheme operators.

1. Work with parents to develop policy options

The research highlighted the varied barriers to adoption of reusable nappies. Interventions aiming to address one barrier without considering others may remain unattractive to parents. Engaging diverse groups of parents in developing policy options, or at least testing policy options with groups of parents, could help to take into account the lived experiences likely to influence uptake of schemes.

2. Support the development of the evidence base on reusable nappy schemes

There is evidence to suggest that schemes involving the provision of free reusable nappy kits, free laundry services and financial incentives like vouchers or grant/cashback schemes may hold promise for increasing uptake

of reusable nappies. Trials or pilot projects involving robust design for evaluation would improve the evidence base for the effectiveness of such schemes in the Scottish context. Such studies could focus on area-based trial interventions, within particular cities or local authority areas for example.

3. Develop a Scotland-specific Life Cycle Assessment

Future policy appraisals and evaluations of scheme impacts could benefit from Scotland-specific data on the impacts of using reusables and reducing waste from disposables. Given the relative importance of electricity to the impacts of reusable nappies, and the impact differences found between utilising general UK electricity mixes and Scotland-specific electricity grid mixes (Sandison et al., 2023; Sandison & Yeluripati, 2024), a Scotland-specific LCA could better reflect impacts of using reusables in Scotland. This would draw on data on Scotland's energy mix and on practices for washing and drying reusables in the Scottish context.

4. Increase the visibility of reusable nappies in health services, shops and the media

Focus group participants recommended early and repeated exposure to reusable nappies during pregnancy and beyond, as well as opportunities for hands on experience e.g. in antenatal classes, maternity wards, and through health visitors.

5. Avoid setting reusables against disposables

Where schemes are successful in encouraging adoption of reusables, parents were very likely to continue using disposables some of the time. Presenting reusables and disposables as compatible, rather than setting these in opposition to each other may help to combat perceptions of reusables as an alternative choice which involves a large undertaking of additional time and labour for parents.

6. Address gender inequalities in nappy care work by targeting partners

The gendered impacts of care work associated with reusables, as highlighted in the evidence review, suggest that interventions and campaigns should avoid taking a gender-blind approach to reusable nappy promotion which could serve to reinforce existing inequalities. There may be value in specifically targeting expectant dads to take an active role in decision-making, research and laundering of reusables.

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Appendix A: Literature review protocol

Objectives

The project aims to provide evidence to inform the assessment of potential policy options for further supporting uptake of reusable nappies in Scotland.

The literature review will address the following objectives:

1. To develop a thorough understanding of the behaviours and motivations of families around nappy choices, both what encourages and prevents them from using reusable nappies. This includes understanding of individual/family-level choices but also wider social 'systems' that enable or constrain the use of reusable nappies.
2. Understand the overall impacts of schemes to increase reusable nappies use.

Method overview

The literature review will follow rapid evidence assessment/rapid review methodology. This comprises elements of a systematic literature review (e.g. replicable search strategy, transparent inclusion/exclusion criteria), conducted over a short timescale for the timely production of policy relevant research (Thomas et al., 2013). Due to time constraints rapid reviews are necessarily less comprehensive and rigorous than full systematic reviews, including e.g. more limited search strategies, narrower scope or considering a narrower range of research methods.

Keywords

Reusability keywords	Nappies keywords	Behavioural keywords	Intervention keywords	Impact keywords
Reusable Cloth Real	Nappies/nappy Diaper	Behaviour Behavior Attitudes Perception Barrier Motivation	Intervention Evaluat* Scheme Initiative	'Environmental impact' 'carbon footprint' LCA

*indicates inclusion of related words with different endings e.g. evaluation/evaluate/evaluating

Search strategy: Academic literature

Databases: ISI Web of Science; Google Scholar as secondary source.

Search terms: Boolean combinations of selected keywords from above table.

Recording: Searches are recorded into a spreadsheet, including rationale for either using the outcome of the search, or direction of further refinement.

Date: Date of search

Where searched: Name of database

Date range: Time period

Search string: Exact search string used

Number of papers: Number of papers found with search string

Accepted: Is this the final search string?

Rationale: Why string accepted or rejected, including edits made to next string

Comments: Additional comments

Grey literature

Non-academic literature will be sourced through targeted searching of websites of relevant organisations (see table below) using organisational website search functions and/or Google Site Search, supplemented by identification of grey literature through the Google Scholar searches described above. The grey literature returned through these two approaches will be screened according to the same inclusion criteria as the academic literature (see below). While the focus will be on publications from Scotland and the UK, some international literature will be included by searching key organisations at the European level.

Organisation category	Organisations
Scottish and UK organisations	The Scottish Government; Zero Waste Scotland; SEPA, UK Government; WRAP; Environment Agency; Women's Environment Network
Scottish Local authorities*	North Ayrshire Council; Dumfries & Galloway; East Renfrewshire; Inverclyde; West Dunbartonshire; Edinburgh City Council, East Lothian.
International organisations	RREUSE; European Environment Agency

* Targeting council areas where there are known local authority or community schemes in place.

For government websites, and websites that allow searching by document type (such as research reports, publications), searches for research reports will be carried out on these websites. For other websites, searches will be carried out through google site search, which allows for Boolean combinations of keywords.

Recording: Search strings used will be recorded and, as far as possible, the same search strings will be used across all organisational websites. Due to the diversity of

content likely to be returned by searches, there will be no systematic recording of the results of searches in terms of the number of entries returned.

Screening

For each accepted search, returns will be screened by title and abstract/executive summary by a single researcher. Acceptance/rejection of returns will be decided with reference to the inclusion/exclusion criteria set out below. For Google Scholar searches, only the first 100 returns (10 pages of search results) for each search will be screened for inclusion due to the diminishing likelihood of relevance beyond this point. To check consistency, 50 returns from Web of Science will be screened for acceptance/rejection by a second person and agreement rate calculated. All sources accepted as part of the screening process will be entered in a database and duplicates removed.

Full list of inclusion/exclusion criteria

	Include	Rationale	Applied at:
Geographic area	High-income countries in Western Europe, North America and Australasia	Comparability with Scottish context.	Search/ screening
Language	English language	Research team skills	search
Population(s) of interest	Parents of young children (age 0-5); operators of interventions/schemes supporting uptake of reusable nappies	Exclude research on incontinence products designed for adults and older children	screening
Settings of interest	Home, travel and other everyday settings	Exclude research on use of different types of nappies in clinical settings like hospitals	screening
Outcomes of interest	Behaviour, attitudes, perceptions, beliefs relating to use of reusable nappies; Environmental, economic and social impacts of interventions /schemes/policies to support uptake of reusable nappies	Relevance to study objectives. Exclude clinical research on health implications of reusable vs. disposable nappies. Excluded as clinical research not focused on attitudes/behaviours of parents or impacts of schemes/initiatives is outwith scope of project.	screening
Methods	All relevant methods	Allow broad overview of the evidence base	screening
Time period	Last 20 years	Adopting an inclusive approach, may need to be refined later.	search
Document types	Original research articles; literature reviews; grey literature pdf documents. General website material to be included only for the purposes of describing specific	Focus on research evidence reports. Exclude general website content for evidence quality and practical reasons.	search

schemes operating in
Scotland.

Data extraction

The analysis of full texts will involve extraction of information into a spreadsheet matrix. For each source, a line in the matrix will be completed. Categories of data to be recorded are:

- Categorisation of whether study speaks to a) understanding attitudes and behaviour, b) understanding impacts of schemes, c) both, or d) general impacts (not scheme specific)
- Study type (qualitative/ quantitative/ mixed / review)
- Population
- Geographical scope
- Sample size
- Study design (cross-sectional; repeated cross-sectional; natural experiment; experimental; review; LCA; other)
- Barriers to using reusable nappies
- Motivations/drivers to using reusable nappies
- Other relevant attitudes/perceptions/beliefs about reusable nappies
- Description of any scheme/intervention studied
- Attitudes to schemes
- Scheme impacts: economic
- Scheme impacts: environmental
- Scheme impacts: social
- Other relevant impacts of switching to reusable nappies to capture (not scheme-specific)

The matrix will be used to synthesise across studies to address the dual objectives of understanding attitudes towards reusable nappies and assessing the impact of schemes to support use of reusable nappies.

Appendix B: Focus group schedule

18:00-18:05 Welcome and tech check

18:05-18:10 Introduction and overview

- Project aim
- Focus group overview, stressing we want them to discuss amongst themselves as much as possible, but recognise this can be difficult in online situation
- NO JUDGEMENT about their nappy choice, just want to understand more about motivations and barriers
- Housekeeping – be polite and respectful; sensitive info may be shared; confidentiality; remember you're being recorded etc.

18:10-18:20 Icebreaker

- Introduce yourself, how many and ages of children
- Recent milestone achieved

18:20-18:40: What you do

- What type of nappies do you use at the moment, and how are you finding this?
- Ask each individual in turn
- (group directed Qs thereafter)
- Can you tell us about your motivations for using disposables?
- Did you ever think about using reusables?
- To people who haven't used reusables
- If not, what do you think using reusables would be like?
- Can you tell us your motivations for using reusables?
- To people who have used reusables
- Do you ever use disposables?
- If you have used, and gave up, can you explain why?
- Prompt e.g. financial, other children, lack of drying space etc.

18:40-19:00 External Influences

- Was there any person or factor that had a particular influence on your nappy choices? E.g. family member/friend
- WHEN did people make decision about what type of nappy to use?
- What about broader community influences e.g. antenatal groups, parenting groups?
- Did social media have any influence on your decision?

- If you use nursery/daycare, are they supportive of your nappy choice? Are you aware of children in cloth nappies there?

19:00-19:10: Schemes

- Voucher in baby box – did anyone use?
- Explore why not
- Are you aware of any other promotional schemes for reusables nappies? E.g. council led schemes, nappy lending libraries?
- What/how do people feel about second-hand cloth nappies?
- From both environmental and personal cost angles

19:10-19:15: Challenges/Motivators to Reusables

- What would help make people want to use them more?
- If there was one think that would make you try reusables, what would it be?
- Who would be effective promotors? Who is likely to influence people (in general) most?
- e.g. local authority/local community groups, health visitors? Antenatal group?

19:15-19:25: Anything That Hasn't Been Discussed Already/ Additional Prompts

- If you use nursery/daycare, are they supportive of your nappy choice? Are you aware of children in cloth nappies there?
- Do you stick with one disposable brand, or do you try different brands? What makes you try different brands (cost, the materials and chemicals used in the nappies, the comfort for the baby etc.)
- If supermarkets stocked different types of reusables just like they do with disposables, and they were cost effective, would you try reusables?
- Have you thought about using reusables at different stages of your child's life, such as to help with potty training, or having reusables on in the day and disposables in the night?

Appendix C: Nappy scheme evaluations in academic and grey literature

Scheme name and sources: West Sussex Real Nappy Initiative (Husaini et al., 2007)

Country: England

Scheme type: Nappy laundry service

Scheme description: Scheme offered free nappy laundry service

Behavioural impacts: 500 families participated (1999-2000)

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Estimate cost saving of ~£20,000 to local authority, and an equivalent saving of 48 EUR/family/year for families.

Estimated saving of 8000 tonnes of disposable nappies.

Evidence quality considerations: Methods and assumptions for impact assessment not reported.

Scheme name and sources: Uzzell & Leach (2003)

Country: England

Scheme type: Provision of reusable nappies on maternity ward. Free nappy laundry service

Scheme description: Reusable nappies were made available to new mothers staying on a maternity ward. Study participants were sampled before and after the introduction of reusables on the ward. A subset of both the before and after groups were offered a free 6-week trial of a commercial nappy laundry service.

Behavioural impacts: Provision of nappies on the maternity ward did not increase uptake of reusables at 6 weeks post birth. Parents who tried reusables out in the maternity unit reported finding them easier to use than anticipated. Those in the groups offered the laundry service were more likely to report using mainly reusables at 6 weeks post birth than those not offered (25% vs. 2-13% depending on intervention group).

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Not assessed

Evidence quality considerations: Strong research design utilising comparator group (before vs. after) to assess impact of access to reusables on the ward, and control group (offered vs. not offered) to assess impact of laundry service.

Scheme name and sources: North Ayrshire Birth to Potty Scheme (North Ayrshire Council, n.d)

Country: Scotland

Scheme type: Free reusable nappy kit provision

Scheme description: Parents can request trial pack (3 free nappies, 2 wraps, biodegradable liners, laundry bag) and/or birth to potty pack (20 nappies, liners and laundry bag).

Behavioural impacts: >200 families have used the scheme

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Estimated that families save up to £1300 per child.

Evidence quality considerations: No evaluation of behavioural impacts beyond uptake numbers. No comparison to counterfactual. No details given on assumptions for impact estimations.

Scheme name and sources: Darebin Nappy Trial (Siemensma & Hunter, 2007)

Country: Australia

Scheme type: Free reusable nappy kit provision

Scheme description: Parents who normally used disposables (n=14) used disposable nappies for 14 days, recording information such as time spent, nappies used, leaks. Then used reusables, provided as a full modern nappy pack, for 14 days, recording same data. Participants' water use was monitored.

Behavioural impacts: 2 participants did not complete the reusables trial. Of those that completed, all 12 said they would continue to use reusables, and would recommend to new parents. On average, participants also used one disposable nappy per day during the reusables trial.

Economic, environmental and social impacts: During the reusables trial, parents spent slightly more time per day on nappies (29 min, compared to 24 min with disposables), and experienced more leaks (0.5 leaks per day compared to 0.2 per day with disposables). Water use was 15% higher during the reusables trial.

Evidence quality considerations: Self-selected sample. No follow up after 28 day trial period.

Scheme name and sources: Mazzelkontjes pilot scheme (Kok, 2018)

Country: Netherlands

Scheme type: Free reusable nappy kit provision. Subsidised nappy kits to buy. Nappy library

Scheme description: Participants (n=69) took part in a pilot run across 3 municipalities, each operating a different type of scheme. One municipality offered a choice of subsidised nappy kit leasing or purchase, another offered only subsidised purchase, another offered a free reusable nappy kit.

Behavioural impacts: Of the 69 participants, 10 were disappointed with reusable nappies and reverted to disposables, 19 continued to use reusables exclusively, 40 continued to use reusables in combination with disposables. Greatest continued use at the end of the pilot was in the municipality offering free kits (31/32 continued to use reusables; 27 of which in combination with disposables).

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Not assessed

Evidence quality considerations: Some comparison between pilot sample and comparator group (survey respondents who use or had previously used reusables) attempted, but comparability limited. Sample sizes across the 3 municipalities varied widely, limiting comparison of schemes. No long-term follow-up.

Scheme name and sources: Real Nappies for London Scheme (RNfL) (Warner et al., 2015, 2017, 2018)

Country: England

Scheme type: Voucher scheme

Scheme description: RNfL launched in 2007. Residents of participating London Boroughs can request a voucher towards the costs of reusable nappies. Voucher value from 2007-2012 ranged from £30-54 depending on borough, and during 2012-2016 averaged £45.

Behavioural impacts: 2007-2012: 9,653 vouchers issued (7,047 redeemed). 2012-2016: 4192 vouchers issued (3188 redeemed).

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Evaluations estimated local authority savings totalling ~£968,257 in Landfill Tax and disposal costs (vs. cost of £92,113 to administer scheme), for 2007-2016.

Estimated total of 10,903 tonnes of disposable nappy waste prevented (2007-2017).

Additional benefits identified included: promoting pro-environmental behaviour, community cohesion, social inclusion, cost saving to families.

Evidence quality considerations: No monitoring of behaviour of those redeeming voucher. Impact estimations assume parents redeeming vouchers use reusable nappies from birth to toilet training. Does not assume exclusive use of reusables (rather a saving of 4.7 disposables per day). No comparison to counterfactual.

Scheme name and sources: Scotland's Baby Box voucher scheme (Scottish Government, 2017a, 2017c, 2021)

Country: Scotland

Scheme type: Voucher scheme

Scheme description: Scotland's Baby Box is available to all expectant parents in Scotland. The box provides parents with essential items and information for caring for babies in their first 6 months.

The Baby Box includes a voucher towards reusable nappies since 2019.

Behavioural impacts: Attitudinal impacts: Piloting of the baby box in 2017, after removal of a reusable nappy from the contents, identified nappies as a missing element. 62% supported inclusion of a reusable nappy voucher.

Evaluation of the baby box in 2021 found that midwives and health visitors perceived the reusable nappy voucher to be the least useful item in the box, however it did not feature in the five items most commonly reported as least useful by parents.

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Not assessed.

Evidence quality considerations: Not designed to evaluate impact of the voucher scheme specifically – no assessment of uptake included.

Scheme name and sources: Salhofer et al. (2008)

Country: Austria

Scheme type: Cashback/grant/ other subsidy scheme

Scheme description: Subsidy schemes operate in a number of local waste authorities (e.g. Vienna scheme offered 1000 EUR subsidy on 250 EUR purchases of reusables). Method of administration not detailed.

Behavioural impacts: Proportion of babies for whom a subsidised package of reusables was purchased ranged from 1.4% to 3.3% in 2004 depending on region. Uptake higher in some communities (up to 10.5%).

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Impacts not assessed, beyond reporting of anticipated waste reduction per capita based on an uptake of 10-20% which was not met.

Evidence quality considerations:

Scheme name and sources: Renkert & Filippone (2023)

Country: USA

Scheme type: Free reusable nappy kit provision

Scheme description: Pilot project aiming to alleviate diaper need. Low income families (n=28) were provided with a full reusable nappy kit (24 nappies plus wraps, liners, wipes etc).

Behavioural impacts: 22/28 participants still using reusables at end of project. Most (18) using combination of reusables with disposables. High uptake and maintenance amongst refugee groups, more challenges recruitment and maintenance of reusable use amongst N. American participants

Economic, environmental and social impacts: Reduced nappy costs for participants. Benefits for participants included reduced stress associated with diaper need, but additional work for parents, and reports of increased nappy rashes. Environmental impacts not assessed.

Evidence quality considerations: Evidence of self-selection bias in the participant sample - those from cultures where reusables are the norm, most of whom already had experience of using reusables, were more likely to participate.

Appendix D: Reusable nappy schemes in Scotland

Scheme Name: Dumfries and Galloway Council Real nappy project

Local Authority Area: Dumfries and Galloway

Scheme type: Cash-back scheme

Operated by: Dumfries and Galloway Council

Operational Since: Around 2006

Scheme description: Offers up to £30 cashback for purchasing reusable nappies (if you buy reusable nappy products from £50 or over)

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources: No info available on council's website. Most of the information is from other websites/ news articles:

[Celebrate Real Nappy Week - DNG Online Limited \(dng24.co.uk\)](#) (Appears to be linked with Dumfries Nappy library).

[Go Real - Nappy information page on local authority services](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Nappy Library - Facebook group](#)

Scheme Name: Real Nappy Incentive Scheme

Local Authority Area: North Ayrshire

Scheme type: Nappy incentive scheme/ free trial kit (became the first council to offer free nappy packs from 'birth to potty.')

Operated by: North Ayrshire council

Operational Since: October 2019

Scheme description: Two different nappy pack options.

1. Trial Tester pack (free trial) containing what is needed to trial out cloth nappies for a baby. It is recommended to trial these before committing to option two.
2. Birth to potty (enhanced pack): provides a full set of one-sized reusable nappies, liners and laundry bag.

Must be a resident of North Ayrshire and have a baby (nappy wearing age) or expecting.

Scheme impacts: Reported that families can save up to £1,300 for each child using the scheme. While also reducing the environmental impact of disposable nappies (40%).

Sources:

[Real Nappy Incentive Scheme - North Ayrshire information page](#)

[Reducing Plastics - North Ayrshire Council report](#)

[Ministers visit North Ayrshire Council to find out more about trailblazing nappy scheme for families \(north-ayrshire.gov.uk\)](#)

Scheme Name: Real Nappy Grants

Local Authority Area: Inverclyde

Scheme type: Grant scheme

Operated by: Inverclyde council

Operational Since: September 2008 (short life trial)

Scheme description: Offer grants up to £80 that contribute to the costs of reusable nappies. They are issued on a 'first come first served' basis. Need a proof of purchase.

Scheme impacts: Short life trial was successful and there were 23 applicants showing interest in the scheme. (Do not have updated information on the scheme after the short life trial in 2008).

Sources:

[Real nappy grants - Inverclyde Council](#)

[Council report on promoting real nappies](#)

Scheme Name: East Ayrshire Real Nappy Network (EARNN)

Local Authority Area: East Ayrshire

Scheme type: Nappy incentive scheme/ free kit

Operated by: East Ayrshire Council

Operational Since: June 2005

Scheme description: In 2005, East Ayrshire Council received £21,452 from the WRAP fund used “to encourage the establishment of Real Nappy Networks and Campaigns with the aim of reducing the number of parents using disposable nappies.” In a response to stopping their free weekly disposable nappy collection service (2020), they produced a more environmentally friendly initiative: parents are given the option of being provided with a free supply of reusable nappies from ‘birth to potty’.

Scheme impacts: In an [East Ayrshire council report](#) it is noted how EARNN had conducted a pilot study where 10 sets of parents were given a full supply of reusable nappies. Then, a report of their views of the reusable nappies/ length of use can be assessed (cannot find the final report).

Sources:

Difficult to find information on scheme, mostly found in news articles, some on the council website:

[East Ayrshire Council report on nappies and waste minimisation](#)

[Review of waste management frequently asked questions - East Ayrshire Council webpage](#)

[Nappy collections could take place every three weeks under East Ayrshire Council plans - Daily Record article](#)

[East Ayrshire's weekly nappy collections officially axed - Daily Record article](#)

[East Ayrshire council report](#)

Scheme Name: The Highland Nappy Network

Local Authority Area: NHS Highland area, Moray, the Western Isles, Orkney, Shetland

Scheme type: Nappy library

Operated by: Voluntary organisation (volunteers in different areas of the Highlands and Moray)

Operational Since: November 2001 (Former name: The Highland Real Nappy Project)

Scheme description: Hire reusable nappy kits out; Provide free independent advice; Run events and demonstrations; Sell old nappies/ accessories. Courier service available for areas outwith those served by volunteers.

Scheme impacts: Between 2008-2018, it was reported by Gale Action Forum that each year the scheme diverted 400 tons of nappy waste from Highland landfill sites. [The Highland Real Nappy Project - GALE Action Forum](#)

Sources:

[The Nappy Network - information page](#)

[The Highland Real Nappy Project - GALE Action Forum](#)

Scheme Name: Edinburgh Real Nappy Community

Local Authority Area: Edinburgh city

Scheme type: Nappy library

Operated by: Volunteer run community group. Edinburgh City Council formerly funded a local initiative called the Real Nappy Project; however, budget cuts led the project to end. The Edinburgh Real Nappy Community was then formed.

Operational Since: Around 2016

Scheme description: Run regular events and offer advice. Hire out kits: 'Lending kits': Can be borrowed for up to 4 weeks (6 weeks if newborn). The fee is £20 and there is a refundable deposit of £40. Provides an opportunity to try out cloth nappies (not for 24/7 use)

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Edinburgh Real Nappy Community - information page](#)

[Edinburgh Real Nappy Community Group - Facebook group](#) (private group)

Scheme Name: Nappy library (National Childbirth Trust)

Local Authority Area: Aberdeen City and Shire

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Charity: The National Childbirth Trust. The nappy library is run by volunteers.

Operational Since: Facebook group was created in 2017. No further info available.

Scheme description: Offer 'impartial' advice. Have a hire service/ nappy library where you submit a form and a volunteer will set you up with a reusable nappy kit. The form includes information of what comes with each kit. Full birth to potty kits: £10 per 4 weeks (+ returnable deposit of £30). Newborn kits: £20 for 2 months, (+ £30 deposit). Toddler kit: £5 for 4 weeks (+ £30 returnable deposit). Hiring is on a first-come, first-served basis.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[NCT Aberdeen Nappy Library - Facebook Group](#) (Facebook group is private)

[Nappy Library - Aberdeen City and Shire - information page](#)

Scheme Name: Helensburgh Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Helensburgh, Argyll, and Bute

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group/ run by volunteers

Operational Since: Facebook group was created in March 2019. No further info available.

Scheme description: In 2021 they began hiring out reusable nappy kits (also sell some reusable nappies). Have meet-ups (host events with trained professionals etc). Facebook page also provides tips and general advice about using reusable nappies.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Helensburgh Nappy Library | Helensburgh | Facebook](#) (being updated regularly)

The nappy library has been featured on Zero Waste Scotland's website: [Community-led climate action | Zero Waste Scotland](#)

Scheme Name: Dumfries and Galloway Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Dumfries and Galloway

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: A parent/ volunteer run community group (part of a wider charity group in Dumfries: Bump Baby and Beyond- founded in 2010)

Operational Since: Facebook group created July 2013. No further info available.

Scheme description:

Provides free reusable nappy advice. Nappy hire service (request via Facebook). Monthly hires to test out cloth nappies. Individual nappies/ booster kits, £1 per month. Full kits- 20 nappies & accessories, £10 per month. Birth to potty kit, £10 per month. Offer free long term loan kits (from donations/ old stock). Have regular meet ups (Nappy Natter).

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Dumfries and Galloway Nappy Library - information page](#)

[Dumfries and Galloway Nappy Library - Facebook group](#) (being updated regularly)

Scheme Name: Dundee Cloth Nappies

Local Authority Area: Dundee

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group (local volunteers)

Operational Since: Facebook created March 2013. No further info available.

Scheme description: Offer advice to local parents/ expecting parents. Have a nappy library so that parents can try different types/ brands.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Dundee Cloth Nappies - Facebook group](#) (last post September 2022)

Scheme Name: Fife Real Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Fife (Based in Kirkcaldy)

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group

Operational Since: Facebook created April 2013. No further info available.

Scheme description: Host regular events, demonstrations, advice etc. Hire out reusable nappies (some are free). Include everything that is needed to be able to use reusable nappies on your child (comes with the nappies and accessories).

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Fife Real Nappy Library - Facebook group](#) (last post June 2023)

[Guest blog from Fife Real Nappy Library - Greener Kirkcaldy](#)

[Getting started with reusable nappies - Greener Kirkcaldy blog post](#)

Scheme Name: Falkirk Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Falkirk

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group (run by volunteers)

Operational Since: 2013 (Originally called Falkirk Real Nappies)

Scheme description: Monthly nappy chats/ events. Provide advice/ support. Offer two types of nappy kits to hire: Newborn kit (up to 6 weeks): £10 a month (and a £10 refundable deposit). Birth to potty kit: £20 a month (and a £20 refundable deposit). Sell nappies starting at £1 (at some events).

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Falkirk Nappy Library - Konect information page](#)

[Falkirk real nappies - Facebook group page](#) (being updated regularly)

[Falkirk Nappy Library - information page](#)

Scheme Name: West Lothian Real Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: West Lothian

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Listed as a non-profit organisation. Community group.

Operational Since: Facebook created in October 2016. No further info available.

Scheme description: Provides loan kits and advice for parents who are interested in trying out cloth nappies. Host cloth nappy meet-ups. Also sell old nappies.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[West Lothian real nappies - Facebook group](#) (last post January 2024)

Scheme Name: Lanarkshire Real Nappy Project

Local Authority Area: Lanarkshire

Scheme type: Nappy library and grant scheme

Operated by: Listed as a non-profit organisation. Run by a volunteer group. South Lanarkshire Council are working with the volunteer group to provide an incentive scheme. The Real Nappy Project received money from Lanarkshire Councils Emergency Climate Change fund to buy nappy kits to hire them out to the community (2022, 2023). Also has connections with Swaddle, who are a not-for-profit shop for babies located in the Hamilton area.

Operational Since: Facebook created in 2013. In May 2016, it was taken over by new admins (the same people who run the Facebook group: Lanarkshire Cloth Bum Mums).

Scheme description: Provide hire kits (to test out what works best for the parent/baby): £20 for 6 weeks (plus a £20 refundable deposit). They offer both newborn kits and birth to potty kits. Have regular demonstration nights/ events.

Incentive scheme with South Lanarkshire council: (proposed to) make one off grants (£65) for parents, to encourage the use of reusable nappies.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Facebook group page - Lanarkshire real nappy project](#) (being updated regularly)

[Help to make change to disposable nappies - South Lanarkshire View - news article](#)

[Lanarkshire Real Nappy Project holding Hamilton event on February 22 - Daily Record article](#)

[Lanarkshire Cloth Bum Parents - Facebook group](#) (private group)

[South Lanarkshire Council raises awareness for Reusable Nappy Week - Daily Record article](#)

Scheme Name: Glasgow Sling Library

Local Authority Area: Greater Glasgow and Clyde: Clackmannanshire, East Dunbartonshire, Falkirk, Glasgow City, Stirling.

Scheme type: Sling Library (lend out reusable nappies too)

Operated by: Listed as a 'not for profit social enterprise.' Community group

Operational Since: Incorporated February 2020

Scheme description: Have 'nappy natter' sessions, giving advice etc. Have some newborn and birth to potty kits for lending (£20 per loan). Offer reduced costs/ some free services for families who require it.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Glasgow Sling Library - nappy kit information page](#)

[Facebook group page - Glasgow sling library](#) (being updated regularly)

[Glasgow Sling Library - Company Information page](#)

[Your Support Your Way Glasgow - Glasgow Sling Library information page](#)

[Glasgow Sling Library – Community Wellbeing Exchange information page](#)

Scheme Name: Woodlands Cloth Nappy Community

Local Authority Area: Glasgow (West End)

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group. (Part of Woodlands community- have many different ongoing project/ activities: community garden, baby groups, fruit/veg box collections, wellbeing walks etc.)

Operational Since: January 2021

Scheme description: Operate "borrowing" services that provide parents with all they need to use cloth nappies with their babies. Offer phone advice along the way. Hold monthly online "Nappy cafes".

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Woodlands Cloth Nappy Community - Facebook Group](#) (Last post was April 2023)

[Woodlands Cloth Nappy Cafe \(Online\) & Borrowing Service — Woodlands Community](#)

Scheme Name: Glasgow Cloth Nappies

Local Authority Area: Glasgow

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Community group (run by mums). Also work with Merry-go-round (use their facilities to host 'Nappuccino' meet-ups)

Operational Since: Facebook created October 2011. No further info available.

Scheme description: Hold monthly catch-ups: 'Nappuccinos.' They have trial cloth nappy kits available. Information from an online forum suggests that there are 2 types of trial packs that can be borrowed for 2 weeks (£10). Include a variety of reusable nappies. Newborn loan kits can be rented for 6 weeks (£15). Merry-go-round: has a nappy library and has pre-worn cloth nappies for sale too.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Glasgow Cloth Nappy - Trial and loan kits - Netmums information page](#)

[Facebook group page - Glasgow Cloth Nappies](#) (last post was July 2023)

[Merry Go Round Glasgow - Shop information webpage](#)

Scheme Name: Ayrshire Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Ayrshire

Scheme type: Nappy Library

Operated by: Volunteer-run

Operational Since: Facebook page created August 2013. No further info available.

Scheme description: Offer a reusable nappy kit. Standard hire kits are £10 and a £15 deposit. Can buy 'pre-loved' nappies for a minimum of £1. Have free trial kits, community kits (£10, no deposit) and monthly meet-ups.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Ayrshire Nappy Library to hold educational cloth nappy meet-ups - Irvine Times news article](#)

[Facebook group page - Ayrshire nappy library](#) (being updated regularly)

[Ayrshire Nappy Library Meet - Irvine - Stayhappening event information page](#)

Scheme Name: Grampian Real Nappy Project

Local Authority Area: Aberdeen/ Grampian area

Scheme type: Nappy library (lend nappy kits)

Operated by: Charity: Aberdeen Forward

Operational Since: No clear information available.

Scheme description: Information/advice (including talks and demonstrations to groups and healthcare professionals). Hold Nappuccinos (to chat with other parents). Offer free reusable nappy lending kits. Sell reusable nappies. Also buy back nappies that are no longer needed. Have volunteer networks.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Grampian Real Nappy Project - Aberdeen Voice information page](#) (no information after 2010)

Scheme Name: Orkney Nappy Library

Local Authority Area: Orkney Islands

Scheme type: Nappy library

Operated by: Community group. Initially re-launched by Orkney Zerowaste, however, is administrated by a community group now.

Operational Since: Facebook created November 2019. No further info available.

Scheme description: Offer a lending scheme, where reusable nappies can be rented out (£5 hire fee per month). Have multiple different styles in the kit for parents to trial nappies. Also offer a chatting service to show what is available and speak about any problems they are having with reusable nappies. Include demonstrations to parents/ parents-to-be about nappy types. There are also in-person/online events

where those interested can share their experiences and socialise with each other, creating a network.

Scheme impacts: Not assessed

Sources:

[Facebook group page - Orkney nappy library](#) (being updated regularly)

[Orkney Islands Council information page on nappies](#)

[Free re-usable nappies for cash-strapped families initiative to be explored - The Orcadian Online news article](#)

[Orkney Real Nappy Network - Facebook group](#) (private group)