

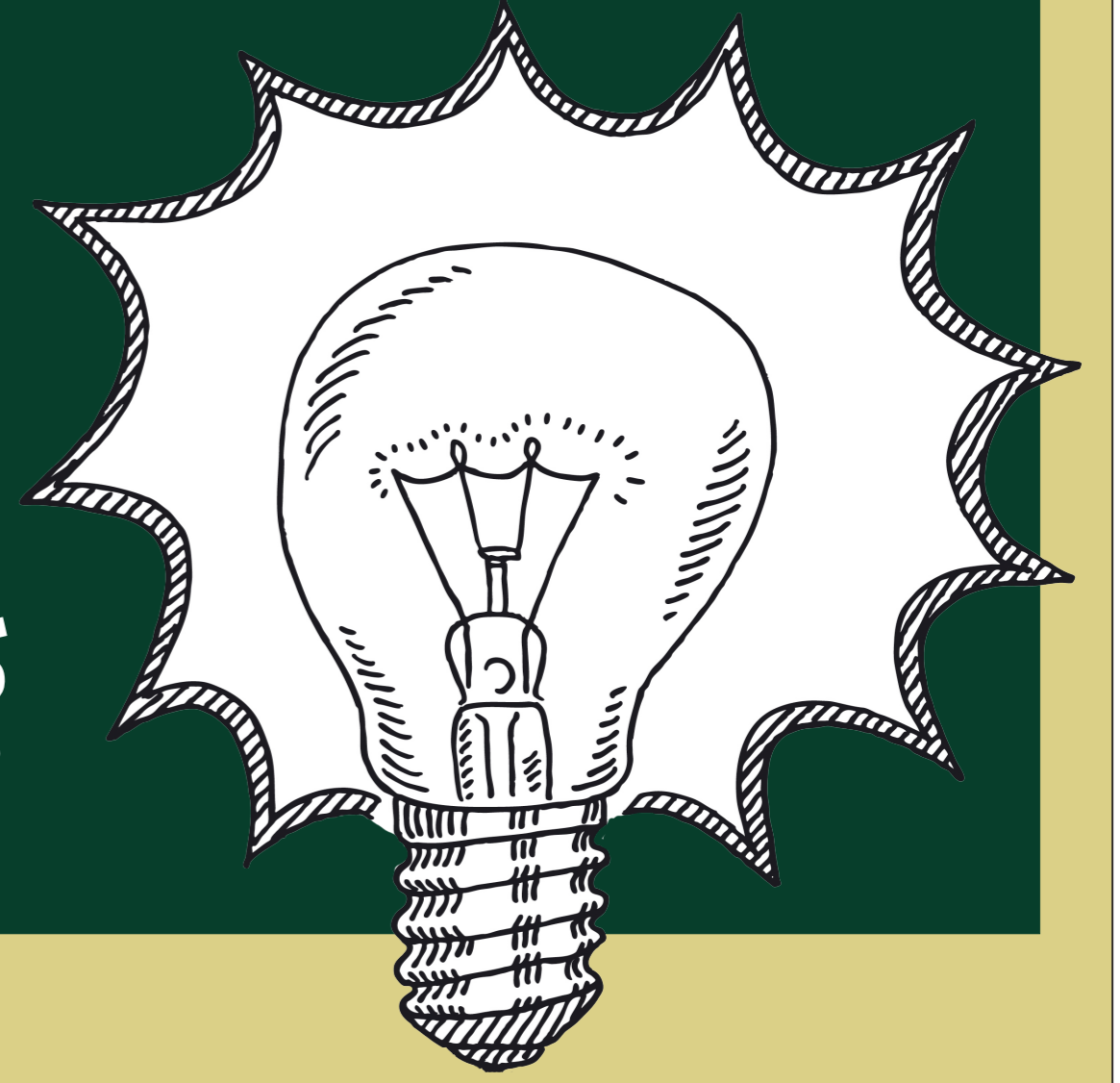
The Scottish Centre for Conflict Resolution National Survey 2013

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effectively use research to improve the situation for children or families or to address issues in personal relationships

8



centre for research on families and relationships

What research was used? Why was it appropriate?

Existing evidence, such as Scottish Government Homelessness statistics and previous research carried out by the Cyrenians, suggested that relationship difficulties are having an impact on the lives of young people and families. We wanted to build on this information and find out how best to support families across Scotland. In view of this we decided to carry out our own research.

Electronic Surveys were the main tool for this research, as it enabled us to seek views from across Scotland. We also used focus groups and paper copies of the survey.

The questionnaires were specifically designed for each target group. They were sent to organisations working across the 5 Housing Options Hubs and Families and follow up emails were issued to increase response rate. The surveys covered organisations in Education, Health, Housing, Criminal Justice and Young People and included equalities monitoring.

Sample questions young people and parents/carers were asked;

- How often conflict occurred?
- How did it make them feel?
- How they dealt with it/would like to deal with it?
- About services available in their area?
- What tools and information they would find most beneficial in relation to managing conflict?

Sample questions professionals were asked:

- About dealing with conflict in families
- If they felt they had the skills to manage this.
- What tools and information they would find most beneficial in relation to managing conflict.

Surveys were also completed by pupils in schools, supported communities and Into-Work programmes, with young people from a range of backgrounds.

We also held two focus groups, with Young Carers and The Scottish Youth Parliament.

How did you get people interested in the research?

At the time of undertaking the research the SCCR was beginning its journey. We used our connections through our Advisory Group to disseminate the research which included members from Homeless Action Scotland, Education Scotland, Aberdeen Foyer, Scottish Government, Parenting Across Scotland and Family Mediation. Subsequently members have used this research in media interviews. The Cyrenians as a wider organisation also helped with the distribution of this research through its staff and connections with other organisations.

A "highlights" page of the research was included in all of our training and events packs for young people, parents/carers and professionals working with families. Key findings were also embedded into the digital hub during design.

The research findings have been used in key pieces of media coverage in order to bring attention to the issue of difficulties within family relationships and to dispel the stigma that can so often surround this topic.

During the SCCR's welcome reception and first national conference the SCCR's research was highlighted. These two events gained wide spread media coverage including BBC radio, Good Morning Scotland, STV News at 6 and STV and BBC Scotland's website. The reach was significant with Opportunity-To-See (OTS) figures at minimum 1,219,802.

The SCCR's research findings were also shared through our reporting to the Scottish Government Third Sector Early Intervention Fund – it is hoped that this will be used to influence policy and decision making in the future; mediation and early intervention remains high on the Scottish Governments priorities;

"It is important that we all have the opportunity to discuss problems at difficult times in our lives to help resolve the challenges we face. This can be particularly important for young people facing homelessness. Relationships breakdown within families and friends is often the cause of homelessness and mediation services have a key role in preventing this".

Margaret Burgess, MSP, Housing and Welfare

Who benefitted from the research?

The research undertaken, highlighted that many families were experiencing conflict and struggling behind closed doors and professionals didn't feel they had the experience or skills they needed. We used this research to shape our work and the resources we designed to better support young people, parents/carers and professionals across Scotland.

Some key findings and impact change:

- A lack of confidence in skills for managing conflict that was occurring at home
- Feelings of isolation, failure and stigma
- A lack of knowledge about mediation and services
- A desire to do things differently, for information & online support about relationships and managing conflict

We provided:

- Free high quality and successful events across Scotland to support everyone to become more confident and skilled in managing conflict.
- An interactive digital hub which provides information, innovative resources, online support and connects people across Scotland.
- A successful National Campaign to raise awareness and dispel the stigma associated with family conflict.

How did you evaluate the impact?

The research directly shaped the content and delivery of resources and events across Scotland. The impact of these events for parents/carers and professionals included;

- 86% / 88% Increased Knowledge
- 81% / 86% Increased Skills
- 86% / 85% Increased Ability

(in relation to managing conflict)

66% of Young People reported feeling more confident in managing conflict.

These events were 1st and 2nd stage evaluated. A comprehensive report is available 'Improving Relationships Improving Lives 3 year report'.

An external evaluation was also conducted by Blake Stevenson in March 2015.

Website analytics show;

- 27,778 visits
- 16,872 Unique visits
- 3:23 average pages per session

What did the team learn from the project?

The initial National Survey research that was undertaken has influenced and shaped our work for the last 3 years. Some of the statistics we gathered were surprising if not shocking in terms of the extent of the problem across Scotland. Over the course of the last 3 years we have learnt the importance of continuing to evaluate our events and ask young people, parents/carers and professionals what it is they need in relation to managing conflict and improving relationships.

We have learnt the importance of a good research base in terms of statistics and hard evidence in order to gain media coverage and political support for our work.

We have also learnt that working collaboratively with professionals across different fields is vital to creating innovative and engaging events and resources which we will continue to do under the new Scottish Government Children Young People and Families Early Intervention Fund.

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Centre for Research on Families and Relationships - Evelyn Gillan Research Impact Prize