



Climate Change and a Just Transition

Engagement
with single parents

March 2024



**One Parent
Families Scotland**
changing lives, challenging poverty



Scottish Government
Riaghaltas na h-Alba

Report on engagement events with single parents to inform climate change policy in Scotland and to support the co-design of two of the Scottish Government's Just Transition Plans on the transport sector and the built environment and construction sector.

Table of Contents

- Executive Summary** 1
- Introduction 4
- Background 6
- Methodology and demographics 12
- Findings: Transport 13
- Findings: Construction and built environment..... 24
- Conclusion and recommendations 32
- Appendix 1: Transport focus group questions 36
- Appendix 2: Housing focus group questions..... 38

Executive Summary

Transport - key points:

The majority of parents we consulted don't drive and rely on public transport, which is something that is backed up by other research on single parents and low-income families.¹²

- For parents who are mostly using public transport, a big issue that came up was the lack of reliability, especially of buses, which parents said means they miss appointments, for example Job Centre Plus mandatory meetings with advisors, and they would see this as a barrier to getting into work or doing a college course.
- For those who do drive they said they'd find it very hard to switch to using public transport because they have multiple young children and the process of getting them to school and nursery and wherever they need to be by bus would be too difficult.
- One of the reasons for that is that the routes don't work for this and often they would need to get multiple different buses for one journey. Something a few different parents raised was the lack of space for prams on buses, especially if you have a double pram.
- Affordability was a key theme. Some parents said they felt worse off using public transport than if they were driving because it's more than the cost of petrol.
- There were big differences between parents from different geographical areas. For example, between those from North Lanarkshire and Falkirk compared to those in Glasgow around the need to travel. Parents living in the Glasgow area all said they did have the essentials around where they lived, whereas the parents from Cumbernauld, Kilsyth and Maddiston said they were really lacking in amenities in their local area.
- Everyone was in agreement that they think it would be a good thing if people could access everything they needed in their local area and also if people could get around purely by public transport, instead of by car, but they felt a lot of a changes that needed to happen to make that workable.

¹ <https://www.transport.gov.scot/publication/transport-and-travel-in-scotland-2021-results-from-the-scottish-household-survey/>

² [Poverty and Inequality Commission, 2019. 'Transport and Poverty in Scotland'](#).

- There were also some concerns raised about measures to get less people driving like the road charges which a couple of parents said had impacted on them and that it really wouldn't be financially feasible for them to upgrade their car even with the option to trade it in.
- And there were some concerns around the impact on work opportunities without a car when their time is already so limited between dropping off and collecting their children.

It's clear from our discussions with single parents that transport is an important factor causing social isolation with an impact on wellbeing, which can affect economic and social outcomes, and therefore inequality. Transport barriers can limit the access to educational and job opportunities, especially in areas of socio-economic disadvantage.

Parents expressed to us that it is the way the current transport system has developed and is organised that causes these challenges, rather than people's needs in themselves. A transport strategy should set out the role that transport can play in reducing poverty and inequality and contributing to net zero in Scotland, rather than just focusing on accessibility for individuals.

Housing - key points:

Many single parents rely on social housing or live in private rented accommodation. As a result, many feel disempowered from making any major contribution to improving their housing conditions to cut their energy use and support efforts to achieve net zero.

- Overall, parents' views make clear that there would be major benefits to single parent families from changes made to homes to improve energy efficiency, but much more information and communication is needed for them to understand their options.
- Parents indicated that in order to go forward with any of these kinds of changes, they would need clear information on: what it is, how it works, costs and benefits to them, financial support, knowledge and awareness of how to get these changes made, when it needs to be done by, and who installs it.
- Parents agreed the changes would need to be made without cost to them as their income would not cover any of the suggested upgrades.
- Parents in Dundee discussed issues with the council around repairing, upgrading, and communication, which they felt contributed to poor energy efficiency and a lack of awareness amongst tenants of their options.

- There was also a wider discussion on lack of suitable housing – for example parents waiting for council housing and one parent living in a flat with four children in one room.

Single parents talk about the impact of high inflation and facing a cost of living that leaves them in deep poverty, resulting in basic housing costs being impossible to cover. Most of the single parents we spoke to know that making improvements to their home, so it becomes more energy efficient is the ideal for the environment and for their families' health. Many live in social housing and these landlords have the responsibility to improve the quality and energy efficiency of homes to address inadequate ventilation, heating and insulation.

Parents living in private rented sector often described their accommodation as substandard and told us their landlord often fails to respond to even the most basic problems with their home. They worried that requirements to upgrade may result in increasing rents or owners deciding to sell.

Parents told us the considerable upfront costs of improvements are likely to be unaffordable, despite available grants. Even where households may be motivated and able to make improvements, access to the necessary finance and borrowing required to pay for upgrades has the potential to be more expensive due to financial status and history.

There was a lot of uncertainty about costs and even the most basic draught proofing costs were felt to be unaffordable.

Mention was made of having a more connected approach locally to the whole issue of climate change and how people could contribute by making their homes more energy efficient. It was felt the push for environmental concerns had to be made more local and it is important to build community capacity to support a just transition - including participation of businesses, charities and public sector.

Sustained, multi-channel, community campaigns to support awareness and action should be used and for example YouTube as a key channel was mentioned.

Single parents we spoke to did want to want to act on climate change, but don't know where to start. Enabling communities to develop and therefore buy into initiatives in their own area was felt to be essential to a just transition.

Introduction

One Parent Families Scotland is actively involved in the Climate Policy Engagement Network, as well as the Just Transition Commission. Our involvement in these activities has been informed by our consultations with and support of single parents around topics related to the transition to net zero, such as transport, employment, opportunities for accessing training and gaining qualifications, housing, and energy costs.

To further progress this work we applied for and received funding from the Scottish Government to engage with single parents, allowing us to place the topics of climate change and a just transition to net zero within the contexts of their day-to-day experiences.

This engagement aims to fill a gap in our consultations with parents to date, which has a specific focus on how they feel the changes involved in a transition to net zero will impact on them, and how this could be achieved in a way which reduces, rather than exacerbates, existing inequalities, or creates new ones.

This is intended to inform the Scottish Government's Just Transition plans, and our engagement was based around the government's discussion papers and engagement packs focusing on the transport sector³ and the built environment and construction sector⁴. We used our expertise and relationships with single parents in order to put these themes into the context of single parents' lives and provide the necessary information and support to make these topics accessible for the parents we work with.

The engagement consisted of five focus groups in total, with three discussing transport and two discussing housing. We ensured that more marginalised groups of single parents were represented within the focus groups. We adopted a place-based approach by carrying out at least two focus groups on each topic, based within our local services in five different areas.

³ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/06/transition-transport-sector-discussion-paper/documents/transition-transport/transition-transport/govscot%3Adocument/transition-transport.pdf>

⁴ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/transition-built-environment-construction-sector-discussion-paper/>

The reported findings of these events will be analysed by the Scottish Government to support the co-design of three Just Transition Plans. The Plans aim to set out a route for Scotland to fairly transition to a net zero economy in the key sectors of Transport; Built Environment and Construction; and Land Use and Agriculture.

The aim of this research is to support the Scottish Government's work to ensure the transition towards net zero is fair and does not create inequalities or make them worse. Ideally it should help to reduce inequalities, in keeping with the outcomes of the Scottish Government's just transition outcomes as set out in its response to the report of the Just Transition Commission.⁵

⁵ [Just Transition: A Fairer, Greener Scotland \(www.gov.scot\)](https://www.gov.scot)

Background

One Parent Families Scotland

Established in 1944, OPFS has a model of involving single parents, experts by experience, in our work. We have unrivalled knowledge of the issues facing single parent families and are acutely aware of their needs in an ever-changing environment. We involve single parents in our policy and influencing work where we aim to ensure that single parent families' voices are heard at all levels of government.

Demand for our services is considerable: in 2021/22 OPFS supported 8,651 parents, children, and young people. Our services support family wellbeing; empower single parents with the right advice (materially, socially, and emotionally); support parents into training, employment, and education; and contribute to reducing child poverty.

Most single parents are mothers, and we take an intersectional approach, so we work with many BAME (Black and Minority Ethnic), disabled and young single parents who face multiple barriers affecting access to services and opportunities.

Profile of single parent families in Scotland

Single parent families in Scotland are more likely to live in poverty, and for longer, than couple families. Most children in poverty in single parent families live with a parent who is not in work, in a family where there are young children, or where adults are also disadvantaged by health problems, lack of private transport or low qualifications.

Where children in poverty in single parent families also live in a household where someone is disabled, or where there are three or more children, they are likely to be even more disadvantaged: this is important as many do so. A recent briefing from Public Health Scotland shows:⁶

⁶ [Child Poverty in Scotland: priority groups - lone-parent families \(publichealthscotland.scot\)](https://publichealthscotland.scot/policy-research/child-poverty-in-scotland-priority-groups-lone-parent-families)

- Single parent Families make up 25% of all families, and 92% are headed by women. Around 80% of single parents are aged between 25 and 50 years old and less than 1% are teenagers.⁷
- Most (65%) single parents with dependent children in Scotland are in paid employment.
- Four in ten (90,000) children in poverty in Scotland live in a single parent family and thirty-nine percent of children in single parent families live in poverty.
- Two thirds of children in poverty in single parent families (66%) live in families where no one was in paid employment. A quarter (23%) live in families where the parent works part-time.
- Families often belong to more than one priority group. For example, among children in poverty: 40% of children in single parent families also have a disabled person at home; over half (54%) of children in a family with a younger mother are also in a single parent household.
- Single parent families are more likely to live in 'deprived areas'. In the 'most deprived' decile, more than half (53%) of families claiming Child Benefit are single parent families, while in the 'least deprived' decile, this is one in ten.

Single parents and housing in Scotland

"A lot of people do struggle to heat their homes, people have been terrified to put heating on because of the price, the foodbank near me were giving out things to help... Children and parents go cold. A lot of single parents like me only put heating on when children are there."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

Single parents are one of the most vulnerable groups in society when it comes to housing. They face many challenges and barriers in finding and maintaining a suitable and affordable home for themselves and their children. Homeless households are more likely to be single parent households compared to the overall population, at 22% compared to 6% of couples with children.⁸ Single parents are the household type least likely to own property in Scotland, at 29% compared to 77% of couples with children.⁹

⁷ <https://www.gingerbread.org.uk/what-we-do/media-centre/single-parents-facts-figures/>

⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/homelessness-scotland-2021-22/pages/9/>

⁹ https://data.gov.scot/wealth/#Property_wealth

One of the main issues that single parents face is the lack of affordable and adequate housing in the private and social sectors. Many single parents rely on social housing, which is often scarce and in high demand. UK figures show over half (54%) of single parents with children up to the age of five live in social housing, compared to 24% of couple families.¹⁰ However, social housing is not always available or suitable for single parent families, as they may have to wait for long periods on waiting lists, live in overcrowded or poor-quality accommodation, or face discrimination or harassment from landlords or neighbours.¹¹

Another issue that single parents face is the difficulty of moving house, especially after a separation or divorce. Moving house can be stressful and costly for anyone, but it can be particularly challenging for single parents who have to deal with the emotional and financial impact of the separation, as well as the practical aspects of finding a new home, arranging childcare, and changing schools. Single parents are more likely to move house than couple families and they are also more likely to experience negative outcomes such as losing contact with friends and family, losing access to services and support, and feeling isolated or lonely.

A third issue that single parents face is the impact of welfare reforms and benefit changes on their housing situation. Single parents are often on low incomes and depend on benefits such as Universal Credit, or Discretionary Housing Payments to help them pay their rent or mortgage. However, these benefits have been reduced or restricted in recent years, making it harder for single parents to afford their housing costs.

OPFS provides information, advice, and practical support for single parents on various aspects of housing, such as renting a home, buying a home, paying rent or mortgage, dealing with domestic abuse, staying in or leaving a home after separation, and useful contacts.¹² We also advocate for policy changes that would improve the housing situation for single parents, such as increasing the supply and quality of social housing, providing more flexibility and choice for tenants, ensuring fair access to benefits and financial help, and preventing homelessness and evictions.

¹⁰ <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2020-to-2021/family-resources-survey-financial-year-2020-to-2021>

¹¹ https://opfs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/02/6.-Briefing-Six-180904_FINAL.pdf

¹² <https://opfs.org.uk/support-and-advice/>

Single parents and transport in Scotland

"I'm looking for a job just now and I need it to be in the school hours so when I'm looking at a job I'm looking at 'can I get there and get back in time? Is it gonna be easy for me to get there?' if I can't get there on time, if there's no quick, easy way to get there I'm not applying for that job, because I can't do it."

- Single parent with 3 children

Transport is an essential service that enables people, especially single parents, to access work, childcare, education, healthcare, and social activities. However, for many single parents in Scotland, transport is also a source of stress, expense, and exclusion. Single parents face multiple barriers and challenges in accessing affordable and reliable transport, which affect their quality of life and wellbeing.

As we know, single parents are more likely to live in poverty than couple families. They depend on one income, have many of the same living costs as couple families, and have to balance work and caring responsibilities without a supportive institutional framework. A system which would work for single parent families would include flexible, accessible affordable childcare, education support to help enhance the skills and qualifications of single parents and improve their career prospects, family friendly employment, flexible paid parental leave, and social security that offers real security.

Single parents are also more likely to experience social isolation and loneliness¹³, as many have limited support networks and opportunities for social interaction.¹⁴

Transport plays a key role in enabling single parents to participate in society and improve their situation. However, many single parents face difficulties in accessing and affording transport that meets their needs. Some of the main issues that single parents face include:

- **Cost:** Transport is a significant expense for single parents, especially for those who rely on public transport or have to travel long distances. Many single parents struggle to afford the fares for buses, trains, or taxis, which can take up a large proportion of their income or benefits. Single parents may also have to pay extra for their children's travel or for additional services such as school transport or

¹³ [OPFS \(2018\). 'Social isolation, loneliness, and single parents in Scotland'.](#)

¹⁴ [OPFS \(2022\). 'Living Without a Lifeline: Single parenting and the cost of living crisis'.](#)

childcare. Transport costs are one of the main drivers of poverty for single parent families in Scotland.¹⁵

In OPFS's 2022 research on the cost-of-living crisis, 22.3% said they could no longer afford the cost of travel and a further 33.6% said it had become extremely difficult to afford.¹⁶ Participants reported that transport costs were acting as a barrier to their access to work and job or training opportunities, childcare, appointments, activities for children, and lower cost supermarkets.

- **Availability:** Transport provision is often inadequate or inaccessible for single parents, especially in rural areas or disadvantaged urban areas. Single parents may have to rely on infrequent or unreliable buses or trains, which can cause delays, stress, or missed opportunities. Alternatively, they may have to use expensive or unsafe modes of transport such as taxis or private cars, which can increase their financial burden or expose them to risks.
- **Flexibility:** Transport services are often not flexible or responsive to the needs and preferences of single parents, who have to juggle multiple roles and responsibilities. Single parents may have to deal with complex or unpredictable travel patterns, such as taking their children to school or childcare, going to work or training, attending medical appointments or meetings, or visiting family.

Single parents may also have to cope with unexpected events or emergencies that require them to change their plans or travel at short notice. However, many transport services are not adaptable or accommodating to these situations, which can cause problems, frustration, or anxiety.

Current public transport routes tend to favour commuters working core business hours during the week, as opposed to those working part-time and carrying out unpaid care (both of which are more likely to apply to women).

- **Accessibility:** Transport services are often not accessible or inclusive for single parents, especially those who have additional needs or face discrimination on the basis of their physical or mental health, disability, language barriers, cultural differences, or other factors that affect their ability to use transport. There is a lack of adequate provision of spaces on public transport for buggies and

¹⁵ [BLOG: Road blocks to affordable and accessible transport for all in Scotland - The Poverty Alliance](#)

¹⁶ See reference 9.

wheelchairs. Accessing transport with children, single parents can also encounter negative attitudes or behaviours from transport providers or other passengers, such as stigma, harassment, or violence. These factors can make transport more difficult or uncomfortable for single parents and limit their choices and opportunities.

These issues highlight the need for more support and advocacy for single parents and their transport rights. Single parents deserve to have a safe, secure, and comfortable transport service that enables them to access the opportunities and resources they need. By addressing the barriers and challenges that they face in the transport service, we can help them achieve this goal and improve their wellbeing and quality of life.

Methodology and demographics

The Scottish Government is interested in hearing about single parents' views and experiences to make sure it can take those into account in any actions it chooses to take around climate change and the move to net zero.

We carried out five focus groups with single parents in Glasgow, North Lanarkshire, Falkirk, Dundee, and Edinburgh. There were 19 participants, all were single mothers accessing our local services, 15 were white, four were from ethnic minority backgrounds, and five were migrants. The ages of participants varied, with two parents under 25 years.

Three of the discussions focused on **transport**, and two focused on **construction and the built environment** with a focus on housing and energy efficiency.

Our methodology took a qualitative approach, using questions to prompt discussion based upon the Scottish Government's suggested questions from its Just Transition Engagement Packs on transport and construction and the built environment.

In order to contextualise these questions in a way which held relevance for participants' own experiences, we also began with a general discussion regarding how these aspects of their lives (transport and housing) are working and any challenges they are facing within them.

Findings: Transport

“If they really want to take a look at reducing the emission levels, I think they need to invest in the public transportation system: the bus stops, the timings, the information on the app, and all of that. That's the best thing to do right now to get the emission levels down, and a lot hinges on getting this right.”

- Single mum, Glasgow

Transport accounts for 26% of Scotland's greenhouse gas emissions, with the largest portion of those emissions (39%) coming from cars¹⁷. As such, changing the way people get around in Scotland will be essential to meeting the Scottish Government's target of reducing emissions by 75% by 2030 and 100% by 2045. However, there are a number of factors that have to be considered to ensure that inequalities such as those faced by many single parents are not exacerbated by these changes.

Focus groups on transport were held in our Falkirk service based in the village of Maddiston; in our North Lanarkshire service in Cumbernauld (including parents from surrounding areas of Abronhill and Kilsyth); and in our Glasgow service, with parents from different parts of the Greater Glasgow area.

Parents were asked to discuss their own transport use, any barriers they faced to making transport choices with lower emissions, and how these barriers could be broken down, as well as their views on specific initiatives being taken forward by the government around transport with the aim of achieving net zero.

Differing geographical experiences emerged, with Glasgow parents enjoying more frequent public transport options and more amenities within their local area, enabling more active travel. On the other hand, there were common themes amongst all the groups, including problems with the cost, reliability and accessibility of public transport for single parents and their children, and the view that many people would

¹⁷ <https://www.gov.scot/binaries/content/documents/govscot/publications/advice-and-guidance/2023/06/transition-transport-sector-discussion-paper/documents/transition-transport/transition-transport/govscot%3Adocument/transition-transport.pdf>

be encouraged to keep or start driving if these problems aren't resolved.

Public transport and barriers to using it

Most participants in the focus groups said they primarily travel by public transport – particularly buses – but all felt that there were significant issues with the system which need to be addressed.

Cost

Cost was one of the main concerns raised by parents across the focus groups.

“People would use it more if it was not as expensive because for me to go from here into Glasgow it's £8 for a day ticket, it's extortionate. If I want to go anywhere else it's £6, £9 for a train ticket. In the long run it's cheaper having car. If it was cheaper, it would be a bit easier.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

“I feel for the people down in the other village, Whitecross. The bus they've got now is going off the road on Saturday, but they've got to pay £6 to get from there to Maddiston and then another £6 for a bus to get to the doctors, so that's nearly £12 just to go to an appointment because it's two different kinds of buses – they aren't the same type of bus so you couldn't get a day ticket.”

- Single mum, Falkirk

Accessing free bus travel for children

Although children in Scotland are entitled to free bus passes, a number of parents highlighted challenges with accessing these – something which has been raised with our local services by many parents we work with.

“It's not the cheapest to use public transport, it's not. It works out cheaper for me to drive places than it is to get public transport, especially being a parent of three kids. They only just got a free bus passes a couple months ago, they should have been able to travel for free.”

- Single mum, Glasgow

“Bus passes – they take too long to sort out and so hard to set up, why even give them a bus pass if you can’t get onto the council to get the bus pass? I’ve still not got my twins’ bus passes; it took me nearly three years to get my daughter’s bus pass. They start asking you for to send their birth certificates and then the school ended up giving me a form for my daughter’s and she got it within a week.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

Timetables and routes

The regularity of buses and the availability of routes which would meet single parents’ needs was also raised as an issue by participants, particularly in Falkirk and North Lanarkshire.

“They used to have four buses an hour and then it got cut down to two during Covid and it’s never, ever went back up and sometimes two don’t even come.”

- Single mum, Falkirk

“I waited 45 minutes this morning on a bus, from Kilsyth to Cumbernauld, it’s ridiculous. There used to be one every 20 minutes. Now, you’re waiting at least half an hour. Then when you get on the bus you’re going through Condorrat and all that, what’s the point of that? They took off a 35 service that went through Condorrat...”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

“If I go to Lidl in Kilsyth I’m walking half an hour with all my shopping straight up the road, or I’ve got to wait half an hour, 45 minutes for the bus. Sometimes I’m like to the weans, grab a backpack and all of us are traipsing with backpacks.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

“It works for me because I’m not working at the moment, but for one of my kids, she lives in Govan and she goes to [a school in another area], but there is no bus or train that goes from that area. So she has to walk every morning to school and it takes about 30 minutes.”

- Single mum, Glasgow

Reliability

Even where the stated bus timetables and routes are suitable, participants across all the groups agreed that buses couldn't be relied upon to stick to this schedule or turn up at all. This had serious implications for their access to other services and opportunities.

"You can't rely on the buses to get your kids to hospital appointments and stuff and they send you so far out. I'm in Hairmyres and one of my boys is getting an operation in Wishaw, so that's a bus and a train. And when you're a single parent and you've got more than one kid you need to take the other kids with you to that appointment."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

"You are waiting for the bus and the app shows that the bus is here and two minutes later they cancel the bus, you will not see that bus again. It will take 30 minutes to one hour you are still waiting for the bus and you will miss your appointment. Sometimes you are you're going to work, sometimes you have appointment to a GP, so you are late."

- Single mum, Glasgow

"They're always cancelled and stuff like that, to get to the town. They put them off and you don't know about it. A lot of people maybe don't have the app so they're just standing about waiting and the bus has been cancelled and they get frustrated."

- Single mum, Falkirk

"Children aren't going to wait. When you're going to a bus stop with little ones and the bus is always late and then 'cause the bus is late then the next bus has to take double the passengers then it's all squished on the bus and the kids hate the feeling and you end up with them greeting."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

Timetable and ticket apps

Despite having access to apps which provide live updates on bus journeys, a number of parents said this system was often unreliable and inaccurate as well.

"A few times on the First Bus app, I've been watching the bus and I'm like, right I'll go

out and wait, and the bus will disappear off the app. It literally doesn't show up. It's pointless."

- *Single mum, North Lanarkshire*

"The buses have a lot of delays so you'll find more people wanting to start learning how to drive. The government wants to bring down the emission levels but sometimes even the app tells you the bus is coming and there you are standing and the bus passes on the app but the bus is not there and then you find yourself going like 'did I blink?' This is mentally challenging."

- *Single mum, Glasgow*

Integrated ticketing and structure of bus services

Several parents across the focus groups raised the issue of additional costs and complications caused by multiple bus companies operating in the same area with no option for a single ticket system.

"It would help if it was just through the council or something and not two companies."

- *Single mum, Falkirk*

"It's not fun travelling to Cumbernauld with kids because it's a terrible bus service, it puts you off. Why can't we have a public bus service so more folk would use them?"

- *Single mum, North Lanarkshire*

When asked if they would find an app for a smart and integrated ticketing system – as proposed in the Scottish Government's Just Transition Engagement Pack – there was a consensus that this would be helpful, although potentially exclusionary of older people.

"That is a good idea because the fact you're trying to work out one bus and there are 10 different bus companies, if you could have one app with all the different buses and timetables and tickets in one place that would help massively. But you are going to limit that to a certain genre of people and people with smart phones."

- *Single mum, North Lanarkshire*

Spaces for buggies

Another recurring issue was that of accessibility for parents with infants or young children in buggies.

"I had two small children. And because they were in the double buggy that put me off going on buses mostly, because trying to get a double buggy on the bus is hard and if there's already somebody on the bus I'm left standing in the rain waiting for the next bus. When I had my oldest it was a lot easier, but because I had my two youngest so close together it was a lot harder."

- Single mum, Glasgow

"I had prams side by side for my weans when they were babies and see rather than taking them out myself, I usually had to take one wheel off to get through that bit in the bus! I've been on the bus when I had the twin pram and I literally just see another mum and it's raining and you say to the driver, I'll fold it up and that mum can get in, and the driver's just like, naw, it doesn't matter."

Single mum, North Lanarkshire

Taxis

In North Lanarkshire, participants also highlighted issues with an inadequate taxi service, which, taken together with the problems with the bus service, is leaving parents even more isolated.

"We've got one taxi company in Kilsyth. It's ridiculous, you've got to get one from Cumbernauld, so if you have to get a taxi you've got to wait an extra 20 minutes and pay an extra fiver."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

"It's been the same for years. You just could never get a taxi and the one that's there now, you try to get a taxi and you don't ever get one, so you've got phone all the ones from Cumbernauld so you think, what's even the point in having one in Kilsyth?"

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

Car use and options for reducing emissions

Amongst the few participants who said they drive a car, doubts were expressed about how government initiatives intended to support drivers to lower their emissions could work for them as single parents:

Trade-in scheme to replace higher emission cars with newer vehicles

"I don't think it's feasible being a single parent. The only reason I can afford a car is because my dad bought my car, there was no way I could have paid out the money to buy one. So the trade-in option of buying a new car, I'm not in a position to do anything like that just now."

- Single mum, Glasgow

Car-sharing

"It's not practical for single parents. For example, my car, I've got two car seats in the back so that takes up the full back seat so if I was to do a school run with another parent, where would they go? When it comes to taking your kids if you've got more than one kid your car tends to be maxed out."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

Electric cars

"I think they're pushing for the electric cars but they make are far more expensive than a petrol car so who can afford them? The people that can afford the electric cars are the ones that can afford to run anything type of car basically. They're not making it possible for lower income single parents to afford those type of cars."

- Single mum, Glasgow

Low Emission Zones

"I don't like that I can't drive into the town, you get charged for coming but the vet hospital is right in the middle of town. And if there was something up with my pet I need to come in and I'm getting a fine – that doesn't make sense."

- Single mum, Glasgow

"If somebody can't really afford a newer car, then that's actually hurting people that's in poverty as well, charging people who can't afford a new car or a newer car basically to travel into the city centre."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

However, some parents who don't personally drive felt that **others could make the choice to drive less than they do.**

"Some people could really use their cars less, like people who drive their kids to school when they could walk."

- Single mum, Falkirk

"I think a lot of folk now have just got lazy, because there's a lot more motors now on the road over the past couple of years than we've ever seen, especially on that main road. They've got a car so they just jump in it, because it's quicker to get to places."

- Single mum, Falkirk

The impact of the transport system on jobs and opportunities

Participants were also asked about the potential impact of changes to the transport system on jobs, and what they felt should be done to ensure equality of access to any new jobs that are created.

One parent spoke about her own experience **working as a delivery driver** and shared her views on how emissions could be lowered through the deliver system, whilst stressing the importance of ensuring people do not lose access to flexible jobs.

"The problem is there's lots of different companies going out and doing all the deliveries – there could be five or six different companies coming to my door on the one day. Why would they not just have one big hub, like the Royal Mail that just sort the parcels, and deliver them in a more efficient way?"

"But you can't just reduce them and take away all the jobs because for some people that's an easy job to get and it's the only income they've got. Most of these delivery jobs are self-employed jobs. That's a big part of it for a lot of people. I enjoyed that because I could pick my hours. It's an easy job to get into to work around your own life. So, if they're going to change them all to be a different type of structure, would it still be self-employed?"

- Single mum, Glasgow

Others highlighted the importance of **reliable public transportation to accessing jobs**:

"If the transportation was more on time, you could also look for jobs outwith Cumbernauld. I'm limited with time because I'm a single parent, I've got children, I can't rely on transportation to Edinburgh. It is so expensive, and it's so unreliable and when you have to do back to school pick-up, you're not going to take that risk. Even though it could be a great job, the money can make a difference to your family, you're not going to do it because you don't want your kids there at three o'clock with no one to pick them up."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

"They should take more feedback about timings of buses. Not long ago there was an issue in Glasgow with night buses. A lot of parents, they don't have childcare during the day. But at nighttime, they could leave the kids at Granny's house or whatever. Because Granny's finished work, she can have the kids overnight, and mum goes to work. I've done that myself before, but they've taken away a lot of night buses because they say there's only four or five people on the bus, it's not efficient. But that's a lot of families that are now unemployed."

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

"On Sunday there were seven buses cancelled in one day, so if somebody's got to get to their work at a certain time – and it can happen quite regularly, they cancel them just like that – that person's not getting to their work and it's not their fault. Especially when you've only got two an hour, if they don't turn up, you're going to be a couple of hours late."

- Single mum, Falkirk

Active travel

Asked about their experiences around active travel, parents across the focus groups commonly expressed that they walk fairly often and, in the case of parents with fewer amenities in their local area, that they would do so more often if it was practical.

“Think we’re lucky in Cumbernauld because there’s a lot of crossing points you can get to without having to the road, the infrastructure is actually really family friend because I walk everywhere. It is pretty easy to get everywhere in Cumbernauld with children.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

“Where I live, we don’t have a challenge [with walking]; my GP is close by, we have African shops, I can walk to the Forge and then we have a little bank not far from the house.”

- Single mum, Glasgow

“If you look at Cumbernauld on its own, the main necessities are in the town centre, but if you’re in Kilsyth or Condorrat, Abronhill – Abronhill’s massive but there’s not much in it. If you were to buy your shopping from the local Spar the cost is so much higher – nobody can live like that.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

20-minute neighbourhoods

The concept of ‘15-minute cities’/‘20-minute neighbourhoods’¹⁸ was also explained to participants, and there was a shared feeling that this would be very beneficial to single parent families and would allow them to walk more frequently.

“That’s a good solution, especially for the people that like walking, like myself. So, live in an area when everything is around: school, shops, coffee shops or wherever you eat. Just like you plan your life around that. I think it’s easier, and it’s healthier as well. But as we said, Kilsyth area, that wouldn’t be possible.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

¹⁸ <https://www.gov.scot/publications/local-living-20-minute-neighbourhoods-planning-guidance/>

“There's nothing really in our village so if you want to go shopping and stuff you've got to jump on the bus to get into town. There's other villages like Camelon and they've got supermarkets, swimming pools and things like that so they don't really need to travel on transport because it's all in their village, where if we want to go somewhere we've got to go on public transport.”

- Single mum, Falkirk

Safety

The main additional barrier raised by parents regarding walking was their personal safety as single women with children.

“Some areas aren't safe, they've not fixed the streetlights, and there's a lot of woodland bits so you've got tall trees, so I do watch timeframes with sunset and stuff when I've got the little ones. Sometimes I'll just get a taxi when it's dark. My school run is 30 minutes away because it's a better school and sometimes it takes me 45 minutes walking my three-year-old home.”

Cycling

With regards to cycling, more participants expressed doubts around the viability of this option for single parents. There were concerns around bike thefts, practicality, and cost. When asked what would encourage more people to cycle, one participant said: *“Give us all a bike.”*

“People are being put off having their own bikes around because you chain up at certain places and people just steal it. I've seen it at the kids' school, kids are cycling to school, and their bikes are getting stolen because they've only got five or six bike points inside the school so they're chaining them up outside. People think, you're cheaper getting the bus than having to keep buying a bike.”

- Single mum, North Lanarkshire

“You can hire them and stuff like that as well, but in Falkirk now there don't seem to be any bikes. I don't know if they've been vandalised, but the last time I was up the high street, there was one sitting and the tires were all burst, eh. So I don't know what's happened to them.”

- *Single mum, Falkirk*

“It's not practical cycling when you've got young kids, you just can't do it, you can't – I've got three so I can't watch all three of them and the road and pedal at the time. But I do walk a lot.”

- *Single mum, Glasgow*

Overall, the focus groups reflected the evidence to date that low-income single parents are already more likely to use public transport than cars, but there is a clear need for significant changes to the transport infrastructure so that they can do so in a way which does not continue to create or exacerbate inequalities. This will be an essential component to achieving a 'just transition'.

“You're talking about the heat pumps. I'd like to know why I'd need that. How much is going to cost? How would I get the grant for that? Who's going to be doing and who's going to come in the house? How long does it take? Where, how, when, why, basically.”

- *Single mum, Dundee*

Parents in Dundee and Edinburgh took part in focus groups on the topic of construction and built environment, where they discussed energy efficiency in homes; their knowledge of the support available to make changes to homes to reduce energy use; and what could be done to encourage and enable single parents like them to make those changes.

One clear theme emerged in both discussions: the parents involved had many questions about the proposed changes and the support available, as this was not a topic with which they were familiar or one which most felt they had seen or heard much information about. Family Support Workers also participated in the discussion and agreed that there was a lack of well-publicised information in this area.

Nonetheless, the participants all had experiences to share regarding what they viewed as inadequate energy efficiency and unmanageable costs in their own and others' homes, and all felt that this was an area where they would welcome greater support and advice.

Participants included parents who were renting from private landlords, councils, and housing associations.

Energy inefficiency and support from private or social landlords

When asked about their experiences of heating their homes at the moment, parents highlighted a number of problems with their housing which were leading to a lack of energy efficiency and high energy bills. Despite all of the parents being tenants, a common theme was that participants felt they were not receiving sufficient support from landlords to fix these issues.

“We were supposed to get insulation in before Covid. We're still waiting. I don't know whether that's still going ahead or not for me. It all got cancelled but I've not had any letters yet say in if they've reinstated that again or not.”

- *Single mum, Dundee (Council tenant)*

"I have rubbish heating. The storage heating doesn't heat so we just get extra blankets. I have a thing that you plug in but it's not safe for my kids. They don't have the insulation on any of our windows or anything either. So we've had people out and they've took it further, and if the landlord doesn't fix it they're gonna get done or whatever it is that happens. Because that house was not made to use, basically."

- *Single mum in Dundee (Private tenant, whose landlord has refused to replace/fix the radiators)*

"The cold comes in from the stair in my flat. A woman smokes in the hall so she has the window in the stair open a lot (she isn't supposed to), the smoke comes in my flat and the smell and the cold comes in. I could do with a draft excluder like those brush ones under the door... I have asked the Housing Officer for help, and they said they won't do draft excluder. Some council bodies do that but mine doesn't."

- *Single mum, Edinburgh (Council tenant)*

"We have to get the Housing back in again because they're trying to find the manifold because there's a blockage in the manifold somewhere so the heat's not getting downstairs. What I've got to do is put the heating off upstairs, keep the heating on downstairs for a while, then put the heating on upstairs, and then it all heats up. I've been putting it on from just before the kids come in and never put off till about 8 o'clock. But it wasn't as warm as it would normally be that way."

- *Single mum Dundee (Housing Association tenant)*

Changes parents are making to reduce energy use

Most participants cited examples of trying to reduce their household energy use, with the primary reason for this being to minimise the costs to themselves while they struggled on a low income.

"I think nowadays people are choosing to either heat the house or eat, because I'll say to my kids if they're cold, go and put a jumper on and I'll try my very best not to put the heating on."

- *Single mum, Dundee*

"In the winter it's absolutely Baltic. I'm in a wooden house. Last year I had my heater on 13 hours a day because it was just so cold and I had a newborn baby. I'm still in debt with my gas, so I'm refusing to put my heaters on until I've paid that debt."

- Single mum, Dundee

"We are trying to be more aware and not leave things on standby, I got a slow cooker [because] I heard it was more energy efficient and I only put on a full clothes wash, I only boil the amount of water needed as well. I was already doing these things before cost-of-living crisis to be honest. Home Energy and Chain Works were really helpful with their advice on small things you can do to reduce your energy and gas bills."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

"I didn't used to switch my plugs off at night, but I do now before I go to bed. You've got to be doing things like that because that's all money."

- Single mum, Dundee

Current awareness of upcoming changes and available support

Most parents attending did not have much awareness of the changes being brought in to work towards achieving net zero or the support available.

Parents had specific questions regarding heat pumps, such as whether it work the same way as traditional electric heaters (around which parents have had negative experiences), what type of liquid is in the pump, what the impact would be on the electric grid, and whether people will be expected to eventually have no gas in their homes at all for cooking.

"If we're all going electric, then I guess that means go back to electric heaters or whatever, they were just awful."

- Single mum, Dundee

A Dundee Family Support Worker said: *"I'm aware of the water pump thing, but just simply because I was on training very recently. That was the first time I'd ever heard the expression 'heat pump'."*

Awareness appeared to be highly dependent on links to organisations who had helped to spread this information to parents.

"I see Facebook adverts for grants, and there is help signposted from different organisations. My son went to 'Kids Discover Edinburgh' run by the council, and they take your details and get back to you. There's help around, but I'm not sure everyone is aware of it."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

"I think that getting the information needs to be more accessible. It's reliant on organisations like us to get information from my partners to share with people. Have you tried this? Have you tried that? Most people don't help that kind of support, so where do you find and how do you put these things into practice when you're already struggling?"

- Family Support Worker, Dundee

There was also a view that more could and should be done to help people understand how to make the best use of their energy systems to be more energy efficient.

"I got a new boiler two years ago and I still don't know how to use it. I find it takes forever for the house to heat up, we'll keep the door shut to the living room and it still takes forever. Any time it goes on the red I'm just like nup, I'll just get them out. When they put the boiler in they never explained how to use it, they're just like 'see ya'."

- Single mum, Dundee

"Speaking for some of those parents I've supported in the past, when they put in things like solar panels, you're left with your new house with all this newfangled stuff with just a booklet and nobody actually explains to you how it works. I've yet to meet somebody that actually uses their solar panel: everybody I go into their houses, and it's 'yeah I don't really understand it, I just ignore it.'"

- Family Support Worker, Dundee

Suggestions on awareness raising

Participants shared their own views on how best spread awareness and understanding regarding the changes, energy efficiency, and how to access support.

"I feel like when they actually instal the things like solar panels, or the heat pumps, or boilers or whatever, they should have an extra 5-10 minutes to explain how to use things and make sure the person understands before they even leave the house."

- Single mum, Dundee

"Doing a YouTube channel to show people how to do it, or TikTok or whatever, so that people can go on and go through the format, of how to turn things on, how to use

things, how economic it is, all that kind of stuff. rather than coming out to people individually, which takes up a lot of time."

- *Single mum, Dundee*

"Giving people knowledge like lids on pans and reducing shower length time (I got a timer to help, doesn't work with the kids though, you know teenagers!) – little things do help!"

- *Single mum, Edinburgh*

"Do the council do newsletters? I know my housing association do newsletters every couple of months."

- *Single mum, Dundee*

Inaccessibility of communications with the council was also raised as a barrier to people learning about and accessing support with energy efficiency, with participants in Dundee highlighting 45-minute waits to speak to the Council and a lack of in-person contact.

"Due to COVID and all this, it doesn't help when [the council office] is not even open and people have to phone up now to get things done. We used to be able to just go in. I think people like, especially the elderly, they actually like to interact with people more than they would over the phone."

- *Single mum, Dundee*

Responsibility for implementing changes

Asked about who should be responsible for ensuring changes are made to homes to make them more energy efficient, parents shared a mix of views but there was a consensus that local and national government had an important role to play.

"The government is leaving it up to council and they aren't doing it, this is common issue with other single parents."

- *Single mum, Edinburgh*

Some participants suggested that energy companies themselves should do more to help with implementing the necessary changes to improve energy efficiency and reduce costs.

"I think it should be mixed. I think the companies themselves should obviously work with the council and landlords to make it better for people who rent the house. So I think we should all link in together to make it easier. I don't think there's one person to blame or one person to point the finger at."

- Single mum, Dundee

"It's annoying because these [energy companies] are multi-millionaire people, which infuriates me, it really does. I got a letter that they're going to send debt collection out to me and I'm like, you get billions. I mean, seriously, for £278? Surely you can wait for that."

- Single mum, Dundee

Some felt that more investment and public education on the part of the Scottish Government was necessary.

"If we want to help the environment the government should put more in to keeping us warm without heating like the windows and draft excluding and things like that. I know new build flats have that energy saving stuff but more work needs to be put into the older buildings because that's where a lot of us council tenants are."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

"Obviously Covid was an extreme situation, but basically overnight, there just appeared to be so much money for advertising and so much money for grants. It's almost like it's a bit of a half-bothered effort with this. Maybe putting the same amount of importance or money behind this that would be beneficial."

- Family Support Worker, Dundee

It was also evident that there was some tension between private landlords and tenants regarding the implementation of such changes, often because of pre-existing poor relationships or a lack of support for the tenant from landlords.

"My landlord has been trying to say, because I'm on benefits, they want all the grants and I'm like, I'm not helping you. You're not helping me in my flat then I'm not helping you get anything new in your house because I don't want to be there so I'm not helping you get the insulation or whatever it is you want because you need to sort out the mould and stuff before you do anything else. So he wants it free and I'm like no, not doing it. If I was gonna live there then I would."

- Single mum, Dundee

"I've already found with some of the families that I've been supporting in their private lets there are grants available for central heating and the landlords aren't living there so they [the landlords] are like, 'no I can't be bothered with that, not interested'."

- Family Support Worker, Dundee

What else would help?

Some other suggestions were raised by participants on what would help them keep their energy use down, such as financial and practical help with repairs and more flexible support for council tenants.

"I can only talk from my situation, I'm not practical in DIY, I don't have a partner who would help like some others, like one parent watches the kids, one does DIY. You can't get round to fixing things because you are unsupported, and not everyone has those skills. Having support financial or a handyman or handywoman kind of thing would help... Also getting someone you trust into your home is a big thing, especially as a woman."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

"It's great [the grants] but the council tenants are a bit of a gap, I know the ad with the caterpillar saying 'we can give you a grant' but council tenants can't apply. The council should offer this to council tenants as well..."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

In Dundee, there was some discussion of how a more flexible scheme available to council and private tenants might help people feel more empowered and informed regarding changes to their home.

"I do like the idea of a general, central fund that you can maybe decide like, my priority would be putting a water pump in or my priority would be replacing my windows or insulation, and I don't have to wait for the landlord to say it's happening, then I do feel a bit more control over what I'm going to prioritise. That would probably make the relationships between the tenants and the landlord, or the tenants and the council better as well."

- Family Support Worker, Dundee

Jobs in the sector

Participants were also invited to share their views on what could be done to ensure equal access to new jobs created in the sector as a result of the transition to net

zero.

"I think High School, getting girls interested in these sectors at that level. My son is in S6, he had a construction placement. I guess maybe there wasn't enough interest from girls but are they helping girls get interested? I think they should do a more general talking to all kids about all options. I hear about surgeons and firefighters and what women have to put up with in those male dominated fields, it doesn't encourage girls to pursue that."

- Single mum, Edinburgh

"Bring it into schools: 'why can't women do this?' The positive and the negatives, that way women can choose to be this; they know they can. Get a woman in who's been in that sort of job to say, 'if you're a woman, you can do this'. I don't think enough women speak out."

- Single mum, Dundee

The focus groups on housing shed a light on some of the inequalities and power disparities which exist when it comes to establishing energy efficiency in homes.

Single parents are less likely to own their own homes, and relationships with either private or social landlords are not always positive; parents who are juggling multiple responsibilities and stresses alone do not always have access to the same information or knowledge about how to be energy efficient or access support to do so; and lower incomes mean that single parents are more likely to be living in poorer quality, energy inefficient homes to begin with. All of these are factors which will need to be considered to ensure that there is a just transition to net zero for everyone.

Conclusion and recommendations

Single parent families, who are likely to be living on low incomes, stand to benefit significantly from a transition to net zero. In order to achieve net zero, changes will have to be made to increase people's use of public transport, enable local living, and greatly improve the energy efficiency of homes. Each of these developments has the

potential to reduce costs, stress and practical challenges for many single parent families.

At the same time, it is absolutely vital that these changes are made in such a way which recognises and seeks to break down the inequalities single parents currently face. Otherwise, there is a risk that single parent families could be left behind and left worse off than before.

Based on the focus groups conducted as part of this engagement and our wider work with single parent families, there are a number of recommendations we would make to ensure that the transition to net zero is a just one.

Recommendations: transport

Each of these recommendations would enable single parents who drive to see public transport as a viable alternative, and would break down some of the inequalities and barriers facing single parents who already use public transport as their primary means of travel.

- Extend free bus travel to everyone receiving Universal Credit and other low-income benefits to remove a real barrier to work, education and childcare, and ensure that low-income single parents who drive are presented with an affordable alternative.
- Make the process for applying for free bus passes for children easier so that low-income families are not forced to pay for multiple bus tickets due to administrative delays, and include train travel within these passes so that children who do not live close to a suitable bus route are not disadvantaged.
- The infrastructure (timetables, regularity and routing) of public transport should be responsive to families' needs. For example, improvements around regularity linked to school timetables and routes from home to childcare then onto further education or work for parents.
- The design of buses and trains for people getting on and off with wheelchairs, prams and small children should be improved, including more flip-up seating.
- The training of public transport staff (particularly bus drivers) should include single parent awareness.

- In the longer term, introduce re-regulation – controlling routes and fares, and fund councils to establish municipal bus services which re-invest profits back into the service and reduce fares.
- More investment and awareness raising around affordable ways to access cycling, including in more rural and suburban areas.
- More cycling lanes, spaces on buses and trains for bikes and racks in outdoor spaces for securely storing bikes.
- Offer greater financial support for low-income single parents to trade-in high emission cars, in recognition of the fact that transitioning away from car use will not be possible for some families until the public transport system is radically reformed.
- Implement plans for 20-minute neighbourhoods, which are likely to be of particular benefit to low-income single parents, who are less likely to have access to a car and face a number of financial and practical barriers to accessing services and opportunities outside of their local community.

Recommendations: built environment and construction

- Prioritise households experiencing fuel poverty in initiatives to improve energy efficiency and in available support such as grants.
- Ensure that low-income single parent families can access support to make these changes at no additional cost to themselves. Otherwise this is likely to exacerbate poverty and/or such families will be left behind in the transition to net zero.
- This support should not only be financial but practical and educational to ensure that families are making the best use of any new technology and energy efficiency measures.
- Strengthen laws to ensure there is a right to a safe, warm, and affordable home.
- Everyone should have access to information on their housing rights and how to get advice to ensure they are applied in practice.

Recommendations: Anti-poverty and jobs

- The work to achieve net zero has to be meaningfully connected to the work to end child poverty, and this should be reflected across strategies, plans and activities in relation to both of those policy areas.
- As such, the just transition should be linked into employability initiatives, so that groups already facing higher rates of unemployment such as single parents are supported to access new jobs that are created as part of this process. Without this interconnectedness there is a risk of reproducing and deepening inequalities.
- The just transition must include a recognition that investing in job creation in more carbon neutral sectors such as the care and childcare sectors – which are female dominated – is an important part of the transition to net zero.
- There must also be recognition in the creation of jobs and development of training and re-skilling opportunities of the importance of flexibility and part-time options in order to remove barriers to women's and particularly single parents' participation in the labour market.

Recommendations: Awareness raising and increasing uptake

- Invest in extensive advertising campaigns which highlight the changes people are being asked to make, the importance of these changes for them (with a particular focus on the potential to save money and protect their children's futures), and the support they can access to make them.
- Climate change champions in local communities who can spread the word and connect people with sources of support which work for them.
- Invest in work around climate change and a just transition within community organisations to enable those with existing links to low-income families and other marginalised groups to help raise awareness, understanding, and uptake of available support.

Appendix 1: Transport focus group questions

General discussion

What is transport like where you live and is there anything at the moment that makes it harder for you to use certain forms of transport?

Is there anything about being a single parent specifically that you think either makes it harder to use certain kinds of transport, or which makes it more important that you can use these kinds of transport?

Reducing car use

Some of the changes being considered by the government to help lower the level of pollution from the roads are: getting more people to use car-sharing services; getting more people using electric cars; charging people for driving their cars on certain roads and charging them more or less depending on the time of day etc., and making things like next-day delivery harder to reduce the amounts of vans on the road.

How do you think any of these changes might impact on single parents or other groups?

Is there anything you think needs to be considered to make sure those kinds of changes don't impact unfairly on anyone?

Public transport and active travel – improvements

The government also plans to get more people using public transport and active options like walking and cycling by making those easier for people to access and making it a more appealing option.

What do you think would make single parents and people in your area more likely to use public transport or to walk or cycle?

Are there positive impacts for single parents and people in your area that you can imagine if it was much easier to access public transport and get to where you need by foot or bike?

Can you describe what your ideal future transport system would look like?

Smart Ticketing

There is a move towards more smart ticketing options, for example apps that can be used on any kind of public transport.

What do you think of smart ticketing?

How do you think the benefits of these kinds of options could be shared fairly amongst people who might not have access to smartphones or not be as familiar with them?

Community planning 15-minute cities

There is a vision/idea called '15-minute cities', which means being able to walk or cycle to everything you need and not having to leave your local area for necessities.

What would be the benefits of 15-minute cities?

Would this make things easier for you?

Any challenges or drawbacks?

Jobs

One of the main benefits which might come out of the changes to tackle climate change are that there will be new jobs with new types of skill. At the same time we know transport itself can be a barrier to work and training and education.

What do you think should be done to make sure single parents are able to benefit from those new jobs and training opportunities?

Is there anything that can be done that we've not talked about already to make sure transport isn't a barrier to work or training?

Appendix 2: Housing focus group questions

General discussion – energy costs and efficiency

Introducing the topic by asking firstly about heating their home or people heating their homes in general.

How do you feel that's working at the moment?

Is it cost-effective?

What about electricity for other lighting/cooking?

What sort of heating system do you have?

Do you feel as though your home is well insulated – i.e. does it keeps the heat in well enough?

Are there any specific challenges around this that you think single parents or people in your local area face?

Reducing energy use – participant ideas

What sorts of changes do you think could be made to help people use less energy in their homes?

Who do you think should be responsible for making the changes that will be needed – should it be landlords, the government, councils, individual renters etc?

Reducing energy use – Scottish Government plans and potential impacts

To require all new buildings to have more environmentally friendly heating systems like electric heat pumps and for existing homes and buildings to replace their systems with these more energy efficient systems: solar panels; double glazing, which reduces heat loss through windows and means fewer draughts and cold spots; solid wall insulation, which can cut your heating costs considerably and make your home more comfortable.

To support this, the government is offering: Interest free loans to cover the costs of these changes for homeowners; grants for homeowners and some private rented sector tenants who are struggling to heat their homes. Local authorities are also each offering their own schemes to help people make some of these changes.

What do you think of those ideas? How would that impact on single parents or other groups?

Do you think the support being offered at the moment goes far enough?

Is there anything that should be done to make sure these changes are fair to different groups including single parents, private renters, people renting council housing, on lower incomes, people with health conditions and so on?

Positives of the changes

Do you have any thoughts on how these changes could benefit single parents in your area?

What would be the downside of not making these changes and just continuing the way things are?

Communication

Do you think these changes and the options for help around them have been advertised well enough?

Did you know about all this before today?

Do you have any ideas for how the need for these changes can be communicated so that everyone knows about it and understands it?

Jobs

One of the main benefits which might come out of the changes to tackle climate change are that there will be new jobs with new types of skill. But we also know that 85% of the construction sector's workforce are men.

How can we make sure that new job and training opportunities can be equally shared between men and women and different groups including single parents?



**One Parent
Families Scotland**
changing lives, challenging poverty

If you have any feedback about anything in this report, please contact us at:

One Parent Families Scotland,
2 York Place, Edinburgh EH1 3EP

Tel: **0131 556 3899**
info@opfs.org.uk

www.opfs.org.uk

 /oneparentfamiliescotland

 @oneparentfamiliescotland

 @opfs