

## Title

**Family Wellbeing Scale: the development of a scale to measure Family Wellbeing (Phase 2)**

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## What did we ask? (Research Questions)

***Can a valid, reliable and robust scale be developed to measure wellbeing in families in Scotland?***

## What is the evidence base? (link to your definition of the poverty gap)

### **Family Wellbeing Scale (FWS)**

The evidence base for developing a Family Wellbeing Scale (FWS) to support closing the poverty related attainment gap comes from a number of sources. The FWS is a short, robust tool designed to address the lack of data, research and evaluation evidence for schools and local authorities, which currently hampers progress in closing the gap (Sosu and Ellis, 2014). The FWS is designed to assist families and professionals to measure and reflect on their levels of wellbeing, and hence support self-reliance and build resilience, thereby preventing negative outcomes (Scottish Government, 2011). It is compatible with a range of evidence-based approaches shown to reduce the attainment gap, which include developing closer partnerships between home and schools (Sosu and Ellis, 2014).

The FWS is a positively worded, accessible tool for early intervention to support families as the attainment gap between children from low-income and high-income households starts early (Sosu and Ellis, 2014). It supports the aim of maximising positive opportunities for children to get the best start in life (Scottish Government, 2008) and promotes working closely with individuals and communities to understand their needs, maximise talents and resources (Scottish Government, 2011). Ultimately, the FWS might help children, families and communities to secure outcomes for themselves (Scottish Government (2009a).

The FWS is a strength based scale that recognises: *'much relies on what we do in our homes and families - and parents in particular have a key role to play. Love,*

*play, sleep, routine, talking, cuddles and bedtime stories may sound soft and fuzzy. They are anything but. Establishing rules and boundaries, teaching right from wrong, good hygiene, healthy eating and so on are vital components of a child's development'*, (Deacon, 2011). Finally, the FWS focuses on improving outcomes for children, young people and their families based on a shared understanding of well-being (Scottish Government, 2009b).

## What did we do?

### **Creation of the Family Wellbeing Scale**

Following Phase 1, Scale A and Scale B, which were originally based on the American Family Strengths Inventory (Defrain & Stinnet, 2008), were analysed taking account of feedback from participant. Statistical analysis was also carried out using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) to assess the Reliability and Validity of both scales (Brace, Kemp & Snelgar, 2009). This resulted in further refinement and creation of a single scale based on 16 items with good levels of reliability and validity. The initial pilot of the FWS by the Family First (*FF*) Service and presentation to East Renfrewshire's Improving Outcomes strategy Group resulted in positive feedback and hence no further modifications were made by the author. In addition 6 factors were identified under which the statements were grouped: *Family Bonding; Togetherness, Respect; Openness; Communication and Affection.*

### **Piloting of the Family Wellbeing Scale**

#### *Family First Service (Children 0-8)*

The Scale was initially piloted with a small number of families by the Family First service in East Renfrewshire, which resulted in positive feedback. They also created sub-prompts to the statements to enhance understanding of the scale and hence more accurate responses. *FF* was created as an early intervention and prevention service to support families who need '*some help*' to build capacity in parenting skills and improve family relationships, resulting in reduced reliance on statutory or clinical interventions.

#### *Family Wellbeing Service (children & young people 8-16)*

The Scale is also about to be piloted with families by the Family Wellbeing Service, which has similar aims but focuses on families with an older group of children.

## What have we found?

### Response to Family Wellbeing Scale

The creation of the FWS was welcomed and approved for use by agencies, including Health, Social Work and Education as a means of gathering data and measuring impact. These agencies were all represented at the presentation of the FWS to the Improving Outcomes Group. The first report on the National Improvement Hub also generated some interest from outside the authority.

### Results of the Family Wellbeing Scale

- *Quantitative*

Table 1. Shows the application of the FWS by Family First for a 1 year period. The results offer evidence to show that the FWS can be employed as a measure of wellbeing and also demonstrate change following intervention.

**Table 1. April 2018 – March 2019**

No. of completed pre-intervention Scales	No. of completed post intervention scales	No. of scales still to be completed or have missing data	No. showing improvement in Family wellbeing scores	No. showing no change in Family wellbeing scores pre and post intervention
65	47	18	31	7

- *Qualitative*

Family First have team meetings where they discuss cases and their impact, as measured by the FWS. They also ask families on each visit to evaluate their wellbeing by rating it out of 10, which provides a trend over time of impact. These meetings and ratings provide evidence that triangulates with the scores on the FWS.

### Recent research

The rationale for creating the FWS to measure wellbeing also comes from research in mental health, which highlighted the importance of the family as a source of resilience in the face of adversity (Sonuga-Barke, 2019). Similarly, improving the family environment may reduce the effects of childhood family adversity on the risk

of Non-suicidal self-injury (Cassels, Van Harmelen, Neufeld, Goodyer, Jones. & Wilkinson, 2018).

### What do we plan to do next? 100 words

- Explore possible development of Norms and scoring system by making the scale available to the general population.
- Complete evaluation of pilot studies using the Scale.
- Explore possible submission of seminar paper for the Scottish Learning Festival 2019 on their theme for SLF 2019 - 'Achieving Excellence and Equity', through: the importance of wellbeing in developing a healthy, successful learning community.
- Explore possible future support for Corporate and Community Services to develop a thematic questionnaire for the Citizen's Panel on services that support wellbeing, based on the Family Wellbeing Scale.

### References

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### Family Wellbeing Scale

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**Please read the statements below, and using the scale (1 – 5) indicate how the statement applies to your perception of your family.**

- Never (1)  
Not much of the time (2)  
Some of the time (3)  
Quite a lot of the time (4)  
All of the time (5)

1	We like to have fun together	1	2	3	4	5
2	We enjoy helping each other	1	2	3	4	5
3	We like to share our feelings with each other	1	2	3	4	5
4	We have a hopeful attitude towards life	1	2	3	4	5
5	We love one another	1	2	3	4	5
6	We feel close to one another	1	2	3	4	5
7	We listen to each other	1	2	3	4	5
8	We have a strong sense of belonging	1	2	3	4	5
9	Life in our family is satisfying to us	1	2	3	4	5
10	We have lots of good times together	1	2	3	4	5
11	We like to be kind to each other	1	2	3	4	5
12	We enjoy our family discussions	1	2	3	4	5
13	We respect the roles each of us plays in the family	1	2	3	4	5
14	There is a sense of peace among us	1	2	3	4	5
15	We like to hug each other	1	2	3	4	5
16	We find it easy to be honest with each other	1	2	3	4	5
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/80)</b>						



**How do the Scale items load up when 6 Factors are extracted?**

**1. Factor: Family Bonding**

No. of Scale Item	Statement
8	We love one another
15	We have a strong sense of belonging
11	We feel close to one another
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/15)</b>	

**2. Factor: Togetherness**

22	There is a sense of peace among us
2	We enjoy helping each other
18	We have lots of good times together
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/15)</b>	

**3. Factor: Respect**

19	We like to be kind to each other
21	We respect the roles each of us plays in the family
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/10)</b>	

**4. Factor: Openness**

6	We have a hopeful attitude towards life
12	We listen to each other
<b>TOTAL SCORE TOTAL SCORE (X/10)</b>	

**5. Factor: Communication**

30	We find it easy to be honest with each other
1	We like to have fun together
17	Life in our family is satisfying to us
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/15)</b>	

**6. Factor: Affection**

27	We like to hug each other
4	We like to share our feelings with each other
20	We enjoy our family discussions
<b>TOTAL SCORE (X/15)</b>	

