

Unmarried Motherhood in Scotland during the Twentieth Century: Mother and Baby Homes

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Key Messages:

- The social acceptance of unmarried mothers and their children in Scotland has varied widely
- The social acceptance of unmarried mothers and their children in Scotland has varied widely
- Century old cultural differences between east and west Scotland influenced acceptance of the unmarried mother and her child
- Such regional and cultural differences also influenced adoption and abortion patterns
- Scottish society was more accepting of unmarried women and their children than English or Welsh society
- Mother and Baby Homes provided accommodation and healthcare for pregnant, unmarried women, who often had nowhere else to turn, and occasional married women escaping abuse
- Mother and Baby Homes were run by voluntary organisations
- Women were free to leave Mother and Baby Homes at any time, but the normal stay was between 6 weeks and 3 months before and after birth.
- Most providers of Mother and Baby Homes offered additional short-term accommodation for the unwed mother and her baby after the 3 month postnatal period if necessary
- Most women who stayed in Mother and Baby Homes and who kept their baby returned home
- Most Mother and Baby Homes did not promote abortion
- The regime in the Mother and Baby Homes was primarily non-punative

Introduction

As increasing numbers of children who were brought up in care or who were adopted seek to learn more about their past, the historic changes in the concept of the family have come under scrutiny and even be linked to broader societal changes. History about the social context of the family and the different providers of services for mothers and their babies can aid in understanding why people behaved as they did. It can also reveal how people were cared for. However, it can only accomplish these goals if it is accurate. The media highlights the victims from the past who, rightly, deserve explanations and justice. Yet the media rarely reflects on the wide variety of service providers, service provision or peoples' experiences of these services. This study focuses on Scotland's Mother and Baby Homes in their social, cultural, political and economic context during the twentieth century. Mother and Baby Homes provided health care, accommodation and food for pregnant women who lacked sufficient family or friendship support networks. Primarily, they served unmarried women. While such homes have been connected with adoption scandals, this study reveals a more complex relationship between Scotland's past and illegitimacy, as well as with Mother and Baby Homes and the mothers and infants they sought to help.

The Social and Cultural Context Surrounding Children Born out of Wedlock in Scotland

Key Points

- Regional variations in Scottish cultural attitudes towards the unmarried mother and her child corresponded with economic differences
- Historically, illegitimacy was more common in Eastern Scottish agricultural communities and Ayrshire
- Scots law concerning marriage and divorce was more liberal than English law
- Cohabitation was probably more common in Scotland than England and Wales

At the turn of the twentieth century, improving the health of the British nation and national efficiency fuelled both political and social initiatives to improve maternal and infant welfare. Politicians, social reformers and medical professionals sought to both prevent population 'degeneration' and tackle high maternal and infant mortality rates. For Scotland, this agenda included tackling illegitimacy.¹ In the run up to 1917, the Scottish illegitimacy rate was consistently higher than that in England and in 1900, on average, the rate was also higher than in most of Europe. While infant death rates declined during the first quarter of the twentieth century, they still remained high, with death rates for illegitimate births in Glasgow in 1925 being higher than the rate for legitimate births in 1875 (see Table 1). While overall these figures had decreased by 1925, they still worried the Scottish government, its public health doctors, the Medical Officers of Health (MOH), and social reformers. Similar to in many Western countries, Scotland's solution to reducing its high infant mortality rates centred on the mothers, both married and single.²

Table 1: Infant death rates in Glasgow per 1000 births, 1873-1925

| | 1873-75 | 1898-1900 | 1923-1925 | Percentage decline between columns 2 and 3 |
|---------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|--------------------------------------------|
| Legitimate births | 152 | 145 | 99.6 | 31% |
| Illegitimate births | 285 | 291 | 167 | 42.6% |

A. K. Chalmers, *The Health of Glasgow, 1818-1925, An Outline* (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1930), p194.

The unmarried mother posed a particular cause for concern because a high proportion of illegitimate children came to the attention of local authorities. This related to the ingrained unwillingness of Scots to enter the poor house and which left the majority of unmarried mothers trying to manage on their own or with the help of their families, and to the reforms to the Scottish Poor Law in the 1870s which left the mothers of illegitimate children ineligible for relief. Well into the twentieth century, these women and their children were dependent on families, friends and charities for survival. More so than England or Wales, Scotland relied on a range of charities to provide both health and social

care. And, charities were vital to providing health and welfare services for the unmarried mother and her child.

Equally important in the case of the unmarried mother were social attitudes towards illegitimacy. These varied considerably by area. Into the twentieth century, illegitimacy was socially accepted in some Scottish communities. Illegitimate children were absorbed into their immediate and extended family and the community without prejudice. This was more common in certain rural areas, particularly the northeast. Families helped raise an illegitimate child or a child's parents lived together without being married. The community accepted the family in the same way it did where the couple was married. Elsewhere in Scotland, illegitimacy was socially unacceptable because it broke historic and religious codes of moral behaviour. Here, the mothers of illegitimate children were more likely to have been abandoned by their families and she was left to try and support herself and her child.³

The varying attitudes towards illegitimacy related, in part, to legislation and the local economy. 'Informal marriages' or marriages contracted by mutual consent of the parties involved, either verbal or written, but without the intervention of Church or State, was outlawed in England in 1753 but remained legal in Scotland until 1940. In contrast, civil marriages were introduced in England and Wales in 1836, but it was 1939 before civil marriages were allowed in Scotland, coinciding with when 'informal' or 'irregular' marriages became illegal. Even then, however, ordinary people had a more flexible definition to what comprised marriage than did official codes and norms.⁴ In addition, divorce was easier to obtain at an earlier date in Scotland than it was south of the border. As early as 1643, Scottish law allowed men and women to divorce on equal grounds, namely adultery or desertion. In contrast, in England and Wales, divorce was unobtainable until 1957, after which a man could only divorce his wife for adultery, while a woman had to prove desertion, cruelty, incest, rape, sodomy or bestiality. Desertion alone was not grounds for divorce. It was 1923 before England and Wales introduced gender equality in divorce. Yet while divorce was easier, earlier in Scotland, remarriage was more difficult because most Scottish churches would not marry divorced people.⁵ Hence, before 1939 remarriage was often impossible until a previous partner had died, while divorce discriminated against the poor and women due to cost. Moreover, it was 1950 before Legal Aid was made available for divorce proceedings which greatly helped poorer couples. Consequently, cohabitation was probably more common in Scotland than in England and Wales and possibly more secret due to widespread disapproval of cohabitation through much of Scotland via Church channels – although the rates of cohabitation have been contested.⁶ However, while the actual numbers of couples who cohabited in any of these countries are impossible to access, the numbers reported to the Registrar General between 1855 and 1939 accounted for twelve per cent of all Scottish Marriages.⁷ Moreover, Scottish marriage traditions and associated legislation make more complicated both classifying an 'unmarried' mother and an 'illegitimate' child.

Economic changes also influenced illegitimacy rates and the acceptance of the unwed mother and her child. In the late nineteenth century, changing agrarian capitalism meant that unlike under the old order, unmarried farm servants now ate and slept separately from their employers. Hence, the employers' moral oversight no longer extended past working hours. Yet the nature of agricultural work required workers in the northeast and Ayrshire to regularly move jobs. With agricultural accommodation usually for groups of single men or women in farm outbuildings, incentives to marry were few.⁸ Illegitimate children born in these communities were frequently raised by grandparents

who played an important role as surrogate parents so that the mother could continue agricultural work. These children were accepted into the family and little, if any, moral shame was attached to either the mother or the illegitimate child, with the child absorbed into the existing family structure.

In the northeast there was also a correspondingly high incidence of illegitimate births where the paternity was acknowledged at registration. Indeed, in Aberdeen, there were many instances of parents living together without getting married, but who readily acknowledged paternity. No moral shame was attached to such arrangements. Unlike in England, for centuries in Scotland, as in most European Countries, the law stated that if the parents of an illegitimate child later married, that child became legitimate on the marriage of the parents. Therefore, in parts of Scotland, family support networks made it possible for committed couples to have children while young, but also to continue working to save enough money for marriage. In contrast, it was 1926 before English law was changed so that a child could be legitimated by the subsequent marriage of the parents, provided that neither had been married to someone else at the time of conception.⁹ Even then, take up was limited because re-registration was public, expensive and time consuming. It could also result in the child being classed as 'legitimated' rather than legitimate.¹⁰ It was 1959 before the Legitimacy Act made legitimate all children born to unmarried parents whose parents subsequently married.

In comparison, the nature of agricultural work in parts of the Highlands and Islands did not greatly impact illegitimacy rates. Instead, marriage ages were relatively advanced. The crofters, or farmers, had to wait for fathers to die before son's acquired the land. This arrangement resulted in fewer children. Moreover, the subsistence nature of crofting meant that not only were families unable to afford to care for additional, illegitimate children, but also that abstinence outside of marriage was preferred.¹¹

In the central belt of Scotland, illegitimacy and marriage followed a different pattern. In the mining and industrial areas, it was common for people to marry younger. Fertility rates were also high. While employment was not secure, the cities provided more employment opportunities than did rural communities. At the same time, however, family support networks were weaker from fear of the moral shame that an illegitimate child might bring to the family. In addition, urban migration patterns meant that for many younger people, the practicalities of family support was less than in smaller, rural communities. Nevertheless, huge urban populations made it easier to hide the fact that a woman was an unmarried mother rather than an abandoned wife or widow, particularly during and after the two World Wars. Hence, both unmarried mothers and their illegitimate children only came to the attention of authorities if they failed to support themselves and their children. In England, this type of poverty could result in the unmarried mother and her child being sent to the workhouse and in later years, moved to mental hospitals, where some unwed mothers remained in 1971. In Scotland and England, those women who managed to support themselves and their child, or who lived with the father without getting married, or where the father or family provided financial or other help probably remained officially undetected and do not appear in the statistics.¹² These regional differences in Scottish illegitimacy rates, marriage norms and any associated stigma or shame remained in Scotland throughout much of the twentieth century. During the 1950s, one-third of the illegitimate children of older women in Aberdeen were living with their cohabiting parents, with no attached shame to either parents or children.¹³ And, in parts of Scotland until at least 1970, the illegitimate child was absorbed into the mothers' parental home.¹⁴ Through the 1990s, unmarried motherhood continued to be tolerated in parts of Scotland much more so than in

most of England and Northern Ireland, where the levels were lower. Elsewhere in Scotland, hastily arranged marriages remained common in the 1970s.¹⁵

Table 2 provides official live birth rates to unmarried mothers in Scotland. However, not all births which would have been formally classed as illegitimate will appear in these figures. These figures suggest that after a distinctive period during the 1940s and 1950s when the illegitimacy rate in Scotland was declining, reflecting the moral climate of the time, illegitimacy rose sharply during the decade before the contraceptive pill became available to single women in 1968.¹⁶ Table 3 provides the changing rates of illegitimate births in Scottish towns demonstrating continued regional variations within Scotland into the twentieth century, with Aberdeen in the northeast shifting from having particularly high levels of illegitimate births to comparatively low levels.¹⁷

Table 2: Births to married and unmarried women in Scotland, 1920-1990

| Scotland live births ¹⁸ | | | | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Year | Total births | Births to married couples | Births to unmarried parents | Births to an unmarried mother as a percentage of all births |
| 1920 | 136,546 | 126,342 | 10,204 | 7.47 |
| 1930 | 94,549 | 87,599 | 6,950 | 7.35 |
| 1940 | 86,403 | 81,312 | 5,091 | 5.89 |
| 1950 | 92,530 | 87,693 | 4,837 | 5.20 |
| 1960 | 101,292 | 96,883 | 4,409 | 4.35 |
| 1971 | 86,728 | 79,699 | 7,029 | 8.10 |
| 1980 | 68,892 | 61,214 | 7,678 | 11.1 |
| 1990 | 65,973 | 48,100 | 17,873 | 27.1 |

Registrar General for Scotland, Annual Report, various years.

Table 3: Illegitimate Percentage of All Live Births as Registered in leading Scottish Towns and London, 1880, 1900 and 1950

| Town | 1880 | 1900 | 1950 |
|-----------|------|------|------|
| Aberdeen | 10.7 | 8.1 | 5.3 |
| Dundee | 10.4 | 8.8 | 6.6 |
| Edinburgh | 7.8 | 7.9 | 5.3 |
| Glasgow | 7.7 | 6.5 | 5.5 |
| Inverness | 7.3 | 6.3 | 7.6 |
| Perth | 8.8 | 7.2 | 6.7 |
| London | 3.9 | 3.6 | 7.0 |

Virginia Wimperis, *The Unmarried Mother and Her Child* (London: George Allen & Unwin, Ltd., 1960, Table 3, n.p.

The cultural divide between eastern and western Scotland also impacted on abortion patterns. Prior to the passage of the 1967 Act which legalised abortion in Great Britain, abortion in Scotland was

not actually illegal, but in most areas its availability was very limited, except in the northeast. Here, prior to this legislation and the NHS (Family Planning) Act 1967, which made birth control available to *all* women and which was extended to Scotland in 1968 under the Health Services and Public Health Act, abortion levels were highest in the Aberdeen region and lowest in the west and west central regions. This pattern related to the greater willingness of consultants who had been trained and who practiced in the northeast to perform abortion procedures, stemming from the greater cultural acceptance of intercourse outside of marriage and the historical acceptance of children born out of wedlock and their mothers. While by the mid-1990s the uptake of abortion had increased dramatically throughout Scotland, inter-regional differences in abortion rates remained noticeable. Abortion rates were higher for all maternal age groups in eastern Scotland than in the West or central belt.¹⁹

This brief summary of the social, cultural and legal differences surrounding the prevalence of and social acceptance of unwed mothers and their babies throughout Scotland suggests the difficulties in generalising about illegitimacy in Scotland or about the voluntary provision of services for these groups.

The Political Context of Illegitimacy in Scotland before the Welfare State

Key points

- The high maternal mortality rate in Scotland prompted politicians to improve maternity services
- Regulating adoption procedures has been a slow process in Britain
- The voluntary providers of Mother and Baby Homes were founded with the aim of keeping mother and baby together
- The regulation of Scottish Mother and Baby Homes was introduced decades earlier than in England
- Comprehensive state funded health care was available for unmarried women in Scotland before it was in England
- Scotland shortened its birth certificate to hide the word 'illegitimate' long before England

Scotland did not share the improvements in maternal and child health in England and Wales that were introduced by pre-World War I liberal governments and adapted postwar.²⁰ Nevertheless, a series of Scottish legislation was introduced to try and lower infant death rates and improve maternal health. It was within this rapidly changing legal environment that many Mother and Baby Homes first opened in Scotland, and under which they operated and in which an the unwed mother could find herself living. In 1903, the *Report of the Royal Commission on Physical Training (Scotland)* recommended significant improvements to feeding children and their environment. Considered the Scottish equivalent to the Inter-Departmental Committee on Physical Deterioration, the legislation resulted in the creation of milk depots to manage the artificial feeding of infants. In 1907, the Notification of Births Act required that all births be registered and was made compulsory in 1915

with the Notification of Births (Extension) Act, with the mother of an illegitimate baby being responsible for registering the birth.¹ In 1908, the Children's Act tackled the neglect and abandonment of children and required the registration of foster parents in an attempt to end baby-farming and infanticide. The Medical Officers of Health (MOH) certainly believed this Act was instrumental in contributing to the declining death rate of illegitimate children.²¹ Starting with the 1914 National Conference on Infant Mortality, the MOsH campaigned to improve antenatal care as a method of tackling both infant and maternal health.

During the Great War, increasing attention was turned toward the health of mothers. The 1915 Midwives (Scotland) Act reflected the English 1902 Midwives Act and sought to both improve and standardize midwifery training. At the end of the war, the Maternity and Child Welfare Act (1918) empowered local authorities to borrow money for maternity and child welfare initiatives. Shortly thereafter, the 1919 Local Government Board Scotland (LGBS) replaced the Scottish Board of Health. This new Board could require local authorities to provide food and milk for pregnant women, nursing mothers and their children, and provide money for maternity and child welfare. However, despite its broad remit and the potential for action, there was little uptake, particularly in poor communities. Moreover, the post war need for economy led to delays in maternity and child welfare centres, supply of food and milk and delays in building maternity homes.²²

The year 1919 also marks the year when the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and Her Child was founded in England with the explicit aim of keeping the unmarried mother and her child together in order to safeguard the mother from having a second illegitimate pregnancy when she realised the responsibility and cost of caring for a child. That same year in Scotland, a Circular to the Maternity and Child Welfare Act highlighted the same aim of keeping the unmarried mother and her child together. While some operators of Mother and Baby Homes, including the Church of Scotland and Salvation Army, followed this practice with this goal being central to their founding such homes, less is known about the operations of the many private lying-in homes operated by charities or a few philanthropic individuals. These homes were more common in the first two decades of the twentieth century when the 'problem' of unmarried mothers received significant public attention and before the Homes were regulated. The MOsH believed these Homes targeted unwed mothers and emphasized adoptions. These homes fade from record during the interwar years and may relate to the 1927 Midwives and Maternity Homes (Scotland) Act which mandated the licensing and inspection of all maternity homes. The Act also strengthened official control over the training and certification of midwives. These regulations were further tightened with the Nursing Homes Registration (Scotland) Act of 1938 which required greater details about the records kept about both patients and procedures. While enforcement of this legislation varied, as did the efforts of staff in encouraging women to keep their babies, this legislation provided an important first step in ensuring a basic quality of care for all mothers, including those unmarried. Such regulations also provided a stark contrast to England and Wales, where the 1974 Finer Report on One-Parent Families highlighted that no registration or inspection of Mother and Baby Homes was required in England.

¹ The father's name could only be recorded if he accompanied the mother to the registrar's office and declared himself willing to have his name added to the birth certificate or a court had determined him to be the father and therefore responsible for maintaining the baby. The compulsory registration of a birth was difficult to enforce, especially in remote parts of Scotland.

During the 1930s, Scottish attention to maternal and infant welfare increased. At the same time, an urban-rural divide in maternal and infant health and welfare services was increasingly notable, with more and better provision in the cities than in rural areas – something that the 1934 Maternal Mortality Report noted was also the case in England. To go some way to addressing maternal health, in 1936, the *Report of a Committee on the Scottish Health Services*, or the Cathcart Report, outlined the need for a unified national health policy to cover a broad range of statutory services to enhance the public health service. It also argued that the high maternal mortality rate in Scotland in comparison with other European countries and particularly England proved the necessity for the provision of a comprehensive maternity service (See Table 4). The only one of the core recommendations to be introduced before the 1948 National Health Service was the Maternity Services (Scotland) Act of 1937. The Act intended to provide state funded comprehensive health care provision for all women and was to be under local authority control. It required a midwife, GP, anaesthetists (where recommended by a medical practitioner) and a consultant obstetrician to work together to provide comprehensive and coordinated healthcare for all expectant mothers during pregnancy, childbirth and for four weeks after birth. It did not distinguish between married and unmarried women. Payment for such services was based on ability. Inability to pay was no longer a barrier to maternity care. The Act also disbarred untrained women from acting as maternity nurses, believing that this would improve care. While implementation of the Maternity Services (Scotland) Act was limited, it made some inroads into addressing maternal mortality.

The Maternity Services (Scotland) Act proved a significant challenge for the country. In 1937, the *PEP Report on the British Health Services* noted poor ante-natal supervision in Scotland compared to England. Only 35 per cent of Scottish expectant women attended ante-natal clinics, compared with 73 per cent in London and 63 per cent of expectant women in county boroughs and 36 per cent in Wales. Nevertheless, the aggregate Scottish figure was double that of English counties where only 17 per cent of expectant women attended antenatal clinics.²³ Yet in the northeast and Dundee, a comprehensive and coordinated maternity and child welfare service was introduced. And, in St Andrews, the Maternity and Child welfare centre was a model of preventive care by the late 1930s. However, in 1943, a *Report on Infant Mortality in Scotland* emphasized the lack of progress in addressing infant mortality during the interwar years and that Scotland's provision of maternity and child welfare services lagged behind that of England, with expenditure per birth in Scotland only two-thirds that in England and Wales.²⁴ Unmarried mothers were the women who were most likely to avoid the maternal and child welfare initiatives, unless they utilized a Mother and Baby home. Indeed, during the 1930s and 1940s, many unmarried mothers and children continued to vanish from the official records through absorption into the mothers own family and because birth registration did not require the child to be identified as illegitimate. Moreover, in many cases, the mother formally adopted her own illegitimate child in order to give the child legal rights, including inheritance rights if the mother died.

During World War II and post war, childcare options declined as women could find better paid jobs elsewhere, meaning day care was a problem for unmarried mothers without family support. There was a housing shortage and domestic service was declining, a core job for many unmarried mothers wanting to keep their child. In addition, council housing preferred married couples, thereby discriminating against single women wishing to keep their child. It was 1977 before local authorities were required to house all homeless people regardless of their background, including unmarried mothers. However, the latter were often allocated the worst housing. These factors all contributed

to a rise in adoption rates after the war. However, while the next section traces changes in adoption legislation, many adoptions were by one or both parents of the child.

Table 4: Comparative Maternal Mortality Rates (per 1,000 births), 1918-1948

| Year | Scotland | England & Wales |
|------|----------|-----------------|
| 1918 | 7.0 | 3.8 |
| 1919 | 6.2 | 4.4 |
| 1920 | 6.2 | 4.3 |
| 1921 | 6.4 | 3.9 |
| 1922 | 6.6 | 3.8 |
| 1923 | 6.4 | 3.8 |
| 1924 | 5.8 | 3.9 |
| 1925 | 6.2 | 4.1 |
| 1926 | 6.4 | 4.1 |
| 1927 | 6.4 | 4.1 |
| 1928 | 7.0 | 4.4 |
| 1929 | 6.9 | 4.3 |
| 1930 | 6.9 | 4.4 |
| 1931 | 5.9 | 4.1 |
| 1932 | 6.2 | 4.2 |
| 1933 | 5.9 | 4.5 |
| 1934 | 6.2 | 4.6 |
| 1935 | 6.3 | 4.1 |
| 1936 | 5.6 | 3.8 |
| 1937 | 4.8 | 3.3 |
| 1938 | 4.9 | 3.1 |
| 1939 | 4.4 | 2.9 |
| 1940 | 4.2 | 2.7 |
| 1941 | 4.7 | 2.8 |
| 1942 | 4.1 | 2.5 |
| 1943 | 3.7 | 2.3 |
| 1944 | 3.0 | 1.9 |
| 1945 | 2.5 | 1.8 |
| 1946 | 2.2 | 1.4 |
| 1947 | 2.0 | 1.2 |
| 1948 | 1.1 | 1.0 |

J. Jenkinson, 'Scottish Health Policy 1918-1948', in C. Nottingham, ed., *The NHS in Scotland: The Legacy of the Past and the Prospect of the Future* (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 1-19, 18.

Adoption

Boarding out was a distinguishing feature of the Scottish Poor Law.²⁵ However, while boarding out and de facto adoptions had long been the practice in Scotland, these practices had also long caused anxiety amongst both social reformers and government officials. Dr A. Maxwell Williamson, MOH for Edinburgh, had founded the first Adoption Society in 1923 in an attempt to formalise adoption

transactions and end baby farming. However, until the Adoption Act of 1926, child adoption had no legal status in Britain. Even then, the Act only applied to England and Wales. It was 1930 before the Adoption of Children (Scotland) Act was passed. Seeking to formalise adoption transactions for the safety of the child and to prevent baby farming. It forbade any payment with respect to the adoption of a child, prohibited certain classes of persons from adopting and sought to end private adoption arrangements. It also set up an Adopted Children's Register. However, neither the English nor the Scottish Act prevented a woman giving a baby away for an informal adoption. Since then, additional legislation has been passed to try and tighten procedures for the benefits of the child and to try and completely eliminate all remnants of past activities that abused or resulted in the death of unwanted children.

The 1939 Adoption of Children (Regulation) Act sought to regularise and standardise the activities of adoption societies so that only they or local authorities could arrange adoption. It also intended to restrict advertisements for adoptive parents or sending children abroad for adoption. While it was not brought into force until 1943 due to the onset of war, it did require the registration of all voluntary adoption agencies. This same year, the Scottish Council for Unmarried Mothers was formed with the aim of dealing with issues surrounding the difference in legislation and its administration in Scotland compared with England. World War II only highlighted the need to address adoption law in both England and Scotland, particularly for the sake of unmarried mothers and their children without financial support.

While in Scotland, a shortened birth certificate which omitted the parents' marital status and hid the word 'illegitimate' or 'adopted' had been available since 1919,² it was 1947 before England allowed shortened birth certificates. In 1949, the Adoption Act made adopted children the inheritors of their adopted parent's estate rather than their birth parents, while also requiring that all adoptions be sanctioned by law and would-be adopters assessed. In addition, a mother could no longer consent to adoption until the child was six weeks old, provided she was capable of giving consent. And, a three month probationary order under local authority supervision was required before an adoption order could be granted. However, it was 1964 before the Succession (Scotland) Act provided that the adopted child could be treated as the child of the adopter, not any other. This was only revised in 2005.

Additional legislation through the Adoption Act 1958 consolidated the Adoption Act 1950 and the Children's Act 1958. It gave local councils the authority to arrange adoption for children who were not in their care as well as those who were. It regulated requirements for adopters, the requirements for adoption agencies and the procedure that was to be followed when making or appealing a court decision. This Act also confirmed the Adoption Act 1950 which envisaged and permitted the mother of an illegitimate child to adopt her own child. The 1976 Adoption Act and the 1978 Adoption (Scotland) Act replaced the 1958 Act throughout Britain and made the use of an adoption agency a requirement. From this time, adoption records were required to be more complete and detailed. The 1978 Adoption (Scotland) Act made it the duty of every council to provide approved adoption services to meet the needs of children who have been or may be adopted, parents and guardians of these children, and people who have adopted or who may adopt

²The information was still recorded for official purposes. People born before 1919 could ask for the word 'illegitimate' to be removed from their birth certificate.

a child.²⁶ It was 1988 before all English councils were required to provide adoption services and 2000 before council provision came under the same inspection regime as voluntary adoption agencies through the Care Standards Act. The Adoption and Children (Scotland) Act 2007 repealed the 1978 act and provided additional support and guidance for all those affected by and involved in an adoption. It was the late twentieth century before the adoption process provided significant support for the unmarried mother. Throughout much of the century, women who for any reason put a child up for adoption had little guarantee about the process or safety of their child. Since the peak in the late 1960s, the number of adoptions in Scotland has been declining, as evident in Table 5.

Table 5: Adoptions and re-registrations in Scotland, 1946-1995

| Year | Number of adoptions | Number of re-registrations ^a |
|---------|---------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1946-50 | 1862 | 636 |
| 1951-55 | 1453 | 467 |
| 1956-60 | 1364 | 364 |
| 1961-65 | 1775 | 352 |
| 1966-70 | 2129 | 619 |
| 1971-75 | 1768 | 781 |
| 1976-80 | 1423 | 710 |
| 1981-85 | 1080 | 791 |
| 1986-90 | 932 | 1132 |
| 1991-95 | 749 | 1168 |

^a The primary reason for re-registering a birth was to add the father's name to the birth certificate

Source: *Registrar General for Scotland, Annual Report 1996*

State Welfare and the Unmarried Mother

Key Points:

- State welfare for unmarried mothers and their children lagged behind healthcare
- Welfare benefits for unmarried mothers and their children have gradually improved since 1948, although discrimination remains in certain areas, particularly housing
- Conservative rhetoric about unmarried mothers did not match social attitudes

While during the 1930s, Scotland had increased the health services available to unmarried mothers, social welfare was different. When in 1942, William Beveridge wrote his report on social insurance that went on to influence the construction of the post-war British welfare state, he recognized the widespread poverty amongst unmarried women and divorced and deserted wives as well as their lack of access to public support. He also recommended that the government investigate the ways in which the state could support unmarried mothers. The initial welfare state did not provide full support for unwed mothers, nor did it implement Beveridge's recommendation for further investigation into the best methods the state could adopt for supporting unmarried mothers and

their children and nor did it seriously consider providing a benefit specifically for them. Nevertheless, the health, social services and social security system of the post war welfare state provided better state support for unmarried mothers and their children than had been available earlier.

The foundation of the National Health Service (NHS) in 1948 provided all mothers and children with free healthcare. In addition, all employed women could claim sickness benefit. And, unmarried mothers were eligible for the same maternity grant as married mothers. The Maternity Allowance paid all mothers from £4 - £12.10s plus thirteen weeks of maternity benefit at 36s per week.²⁷ This meant that no longer did unsupported pregnant women need to work almost until childbirth and which was perceived to contribute to higher than average death rates from childbirth for unmarried mothers and their children in infancy. In addition, both sickness and maternity benefits could be supplemented in cases of need by the National Assistance Board (NAB). Yet, Maternity Allowance was means tested. Not only was this demeaning, it disqualified women suspected of living with a man. In order to enforce the regulations, the NAB regularly visited, which many women found intrusive and belittling.²⁸

Other benefits included that no longer were women required to register for work in order to claim means-tested assistance. While in 1948 these benefits were called National Assistance, they were renamed Supplementary Benefits in 1966 and Income Support in 1988. Moreover, both the eligibility rules for benefit and the levels of benefit became nationally uniform for the first time, providing a notion of equality. In addition, the household means test was abolished. This greatly benefitted unmarried mothers as they could live with their parents and still claim benefit.

Responsibility for social care was divided between the central state and local authorities. However, local authorities did not need to provide social care 'free at the point of need'. The 1948 Act made local authorities responsible for providing lodgings for the homeless. However, it did not stipulate that facilities for unmarried mothers and their children should be separate from that of other homeless people. While Mother and Baby Homes, hostels and voluntary services went some way towards filling this gap, there was only a temporary arrangement. It was 1977 before local authorities were required to house all homeless people regardless of their background, including unwed mothers. Even then, discrimination occurred as many authorities preferred married couples or allocated the unmarried mothers the worst housing. The situation of unmarried mothers was not helped by the tabloid press and some Conservative politicians who pilloried unmarried mothers for taking up housing. For example, in 1988, Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher accused young girls of becoming pregnant simply to get a house and benefits without understanding that the reason there were more unmarried women were in council houses in the 1980s than earlier was because they had previously been excluded.

Despite negative conservative rhetoric, by the 1970s and 1980s social attitudes towards unmarried mothers had changed. The rising levels of unmarried cohabitation during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the rising number of illegitimate births that were jointly registered by unmarried parents indicates a changing social acceptance of childbirth outside of wedlock. And, in 1987, the term 'illegitimate' was by law removed from official discourse. However, by this time, the Mother and Baby Homes in Scotland had closed.

Scottish Mother and Baby Homes

Key points

- Most Mother and Baby Homes run by religious affiliated organisations
- The Homes were located in the big Scottish cities
- Few records remain from these Homes
- Women usually stayed between 1-3 months before and 3-4 months after confinement
- The regime in the Homes was predominantly non-punitive
- Only one home (Perth) was formally tied to adoption

It is within this complex social and political process and mixed economy of health and welfare that Mother and Baby Homes operated in Scotland. The early twentieth century Scottish emphasis on keeping the mother and child together persisted through mid-century. In 1943, the Ministry of Health issued circular No. 2866 on the Care of Illegitimate Children to all local authorities. Two years later, the Ministry reported that 81 per cent of such children remained with their mothers, but argued there was room for improvement.²⁹ In 1952, and influenced by Psychoanalyst John Bowlby and his work on attachment theory,³⁰ the British Medical Association reiterated the view that the illegitimate child should remain with the mother. Most Mother and Baby Homes seem to have adopted that goal as their initial mantra. However, they also had to respect the mother's wishes and sometimes those of her family. The latter was particularly awkward during the 1960s and 1970s when adoption rates throughout Britain rose and some women were pressurised in to placing their baby for adoption, often by families, but also by staff in certain Homes, adoption and social services. This section seeks to provide an overview of the Mother and Baby Homes, including their location, dates of operation (when feasible), who operated them and their regime. The data is inconsistent. Much of the information about these homes and their operation was not written down and the information remained only with the matron. Due to the nature of the births and in some cases adoption, the home's records were frequently destroyed after mother and baby left. Perhaps the most complete information comes from the Salvation Army who operated twenty homes throughout Britain.

The term Mother and Baby Home has changed through the course of the twentieth century. In the early years of the twentieth century they were called maternity homes, during the First World War this switched to Mother and Children's Homes. In 1920, the Salvation Army's Homes were renamed Homes for Mothers and Infants, which remained in use until after World War II. Postwar, the homes were simply called Maternity Homes until 1976 when Mother and Baby Home became standard for the Salvation Army Homes. Homes run by other providers, including the Church of Scotland, used similar names, Maternity Home, Home for Unmarried Mothers and lastly, Mother and Baby Home, which became standard by the end of the Second World War. Despite the different names, these homes provided similar services, namely shelter and maternity care for unmarried mothers and their new-born infants who either could not or would not turn to family and friends. Mothers usually entered the homes when their pregnancy became very apparent, at about six months pregnant, had

their baby either at the home³ or in a hospital and returned/stayed at the home for one to three months afterwards. Sometimes they remained longer if a mother had nowhere else to go, or she moved to a hostel or home where unwed mothers and their children could stay for a short while and which was frequently operated by the same charity as the Mother and Baby Home.

From the interwar years, religious groups were the primary operators of Mother and Baby Homes, including the Salvation Army, the Church of Scotland, the Episcopal Church of Scotland and the Roman Catholic Church. However, a few independent voluntary providers remained with Richmondhill House (formerly Aberdeen Mother and Baby Home) being the most notable. The Homes closed in the 1970s and 1980s due to the increased options available to unwed mothers and changing social attitudes towards unmarried mothers. The Salvation Army was one of the last to formally end its maternity work with single mothers in 1982 with the Catholic operated St Gerard's being the last to close its doors in 1985.

Table 6 lists the known Mother and Baby Homes operating between 1920 and 1990 and where known, their dates of operation. Some of these homes changed names over the years and moved addresses. The name changes have been included in the same listing rather than as a separate listing.

Information on the destination of the mothers and their babies after leaving the homes is also incomplete. Of the homes, only regular data from the Salvation Army Homes remains. However, as they operated more homes than any other provider in Scotland, with three homes, their data is presented in Tables 7-10 as it provides a rough idea of destination patterns of mothers and babies. They highlight the decline in domestic service as a destination for mothers with their baby and which corresponds with a rising number of women going home. However, correlation does not necessarily indicate a positive relationship. Table 11 provides a broader snapshot of destinations of mothers and babies from 1970-72.

The length of stay in Salvation Army homes varied for mothers. There is no specific data for the babies, but they left the home within a day or two of their mothers. Table 9 provides detail on the length of stay for mothers before the birth and Table 10 the length of stay after birth.

³ The Salvation Army Homes delivered babies either in their homes or in another building on site.

Table 6: Mother and Baby Homes in Scotland between 1920-90

| Location | Operator | Name – including name changes for the same home | Dates of operation | Length of Stay Before Confinement ⁴ | Length of Stay After Confinement | Additional information |
|----------|------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Dundee | Salvation Army | Seafield Lodge Cidhmore Clement Park House (Florence Booth House from 30 April, 1929) | 1919-27 1928-29 1928-70 | Varying | 3-4 | 30 Beds |
| Dundee | Episcopal Church | St Ronan's | 1924-1973/74 | 1-7 | 3 | 18 Beds |
| Glasgow | Salvation Army | Ardenshaw Homeland 1 Homeland 2 (32 beds) The Knowe Cleveden House (Fraser of Allander House from 22 Nov. 1968) (28 Beds) | 1920-21* 1920-36 1936-64 1940-47^ 1949-82 | Varying | 3-4 | *Ardenshaw opened in 1901 as a rescue home and became an industrial home in 1920. Until Homeland opened it also served as a maternity home. ^In 1947 the Knowe was also a Hostel for Mothers with Children and had a capacity of 19. It was intended as temporary, longer term accommodation for women who had been through one of the Salvation Army maternity homes. It had a day-nursery so that |

⁴ The figures for length of stay were those provided by the homes.

| | | | | | | |
|-----------|--------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | | | | | mothers could go to work |
| Glasgow | Church of Scotland | Herbert Street Lansdowne Crescent St. Andrew's Drive Sutherland Ave. | 1915-1923 1924-1943 1944-57 1957 – 1974 | 3 | 2 | 17 Beds Closed temporarily in 1973 due to staff shortages |
| Glasgow | Eventually run by the Scottish Council for Unmarried Mothers | Atholl House | 1925-1970s | At least 6 weeks | At least 6 weeks | Longer stays possible after the birth; up to a year if mother keeping baby |
| Bishopton | Roman Catholic Church (Convent of the Good Shepherd) | St. Gerard's | 1928-85 | Usually from 3-6 months total – before and after birth | | 24 Beds |
| Aberdeen | Voluntary Committee of Women's Organisations in Aberdeen | Aberdeen Mother and Baby Home (or Richmondhill House) | Closed 1973/74 | 1.5 | 1.5 | 22 beds Amalgamated with Aberdeen Association of Social Services to provide broader care for unsupported mothers |
| Edinburgh | | Home for Mothers and Babies, Claremont Park | 1924-1970s | | | By 1971 had waived requirement that women return to the home after giving birth, so home more popular than others |
| Edinburgh | Salvation Army | Bonnington Bank House Tor | 1920-47 1948-70 | Varying | 3-4 | 24 Beds |
| Edinburgh | | St Luke's Home Lauriston Home | 1899-1905 1905-34 | | | |

| | | | | | | |
|-------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|--|--|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| | | with Subsidiary Mother and Infant Home Haig Ferguson Memorial Home | 1912-18 and 1918-19? 1934-1974 | | | |
| Perth | Perth Factory Girls Club and Training House for Servants, then National Vigilance Association Scotland (NVAS from 1939) then Family Care | Melville House Girls Hostel and Adoption Society | 1929-72 | | | Registered adoption agency. Provided other services and seems to have only been mother and baby home for girls planning to have baby adopted. Gained international reputation in adoption. |

Notes: In addition to the Mother and Baby Homes, many of these providers also operated Rescue Homes which sometimes accommodated unmarried mothers and the Magdalene Institutions also took some pregnant unmarried women for the earlier part of this period. Those homes included in the table are only those whose primary purpose was to be a Mother and Baby Home. This table also does not include flatlets where unmarried mothers could live with their babies – primarily in the 1960s and 1970s, including the YWCA, Castlehill Housing Association, the Church of Scotland, the Salvation Army via the Knowe and the Catholic Church. Gaps in data meant it was unobtainable. A ‘?’ means the date was either inferred and a ‘/’ indicates two dates were found, but no confirmation of an exact date was identified.

Sources: Anne Ashley, ed. *Illegitimate Children and their Parents in Scotland* (Edinburgh: SCUMC, 1955), 26-27; Salvation Army International Heritage Centre, *Girls Statement Books (Country)*, various years; J. Greenlees, ‘The Peculiar and Complex Female Problem’: The Church of Scotland and health Care for Unwed Mothers, 1900-1948’, in J. Greenlees and L. Bryder, eds., *Western Maternity and Medicine, 1880-1990* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 47-63.

Table 7: Destination of mothers who stayed in Scottish Salvation Army Mother and Baby Homes⁵ (by percentage)

| Year | Situation ⁶ | Home | Friend or Relative | Hospital | To Putative Father | Other |
|-------------------|------------------------|------|--------------------|----------|--------------------|-------|
| 1921 | 53 | 22 | 16 | 3 | 3 | 2 |
| 1931 | 47 | 34 | 16 | | 1 | 3 |
| 1941 | 48 | 35 | 8 | 4 | 3 | 2 |
| 1951 ⁷ | 49 | 44 | | | 1 | 6 |
| 1961 | 14 | 70 | 8 | 2 | | 6 |
| 1971 | 3 | 85 | 7 | | | 5 |

The International Heritage Centre, Salvation Army, *Girls Statement Books (Country)*, various years.

Table 8: Destination of babies born to unwed mothers who stayed in Scottish Salvation Army Homes (by percentage)

| Year | Adopted, Nursing/ Foster Mothers ⁸ | With Mother | Died/stillborn | Hospital | Other |
|------|--------------------------------------------------|-------------|----------------|----------|-------|
| 1921 | 47 | 34 | 12 | 3 | 4 |
| 1931 | 39 | 49 | 6 | | 5 |
| 1941 | 38 | 36 | 16 | 3 | 7 |
| 1951 | 59 | 33 | 6 | 1 | 1 |
| 1961 | 67 | 28 | 3 | 1 | 1 |
| 1971 | 69 | 23 | 3 | 4 | 1 |

The International Heritage Centre, Salvation Army, *Girls Statement Books (Country)*, various years.

⁵ My thanks to Major Kevin Pooley, Social Historian for the Salvation Army, for the data on the Salvation Army Homes in Scotland.

⁶ Most situations found for the women leaving Salvation Army Homes were in domestic service, but some went to hospitals, hotels and occasionally an upper-class household.

⁷ From 1951, 'address only' destinations became more numerous and hence, it was harder to categorize between home and situation

⁸ Included in this category are those babies who were adopted direct from the home or sent to nursing/foster mothers, children's homes or into local authority care. It is unclear what such placements represent or if they were permanent. Nursing/foster mothers is especially difficult because while this could be a stepping stone to adoption (formal or otherwise), a Homes' officer was required to keep in touch with the women for at least three years after discharge. Intermittent surviving records show that some women worked to support their children, maintained contact with them or even reclaimed them entirely (much of this information is for the period pre-1948).

Table 9: Length of stay by mother before birth in Scottish Salvation Army Mother and Baby Home: number of days

| | 1921 | 1931 | 1941 | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 |
|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Min | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Mean | 70.2 | 69.4 | 64.7 | 58.5 | 65.4 | 65.1 |
| Median | 63.0 | 68.0 | 57.0 | 50.0 | 55.0 | 54.0 |
| Max | 210 | 183 | 184 | 190 | 223 | 189 |

The International Heritage Centre, Salvation Army, *Girls Statement Books (Country)*, various years.

Table 10: Length of stay by mother after giving birth in Scottish Salvation Army Mother and Baby Homes (number of days)

| | 1921 | 1931 | 1941 | 1951 | 1961 | 1971 |
|--------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| Min | 15 | 16 | 29 | 22 | 0 | 26 |
| Mean | 162.5 | 187.8 | 202.4 | 118.7 | 58.9 | 92.5 |
| Median | 177 | 187 | 200 | 101 | 50 | 83 |
| Max | 387 | 446 | 366 | 382 | 997 | 308 |

Note: If a baby was put up for adoption, both mother and baby left the home within one or two days of each other.

Table 11: Destination of Mothers and Babies from Scottish Mother and Baby Homes 1970-72

| Home | Numbers admitted | Babies fostered and/or adopted | Babies kept by mother | Mothers left before baby born | Stillborn | Miscarriage | Baby died shortly after birth | Proportion of babies adopted | Other information |
|----------------------------------------------|------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Lansdowne House, Glasgow | 189 | 122 | 53 | 13 | 1 | | | 65% | 2 who left before baby born got married; All those discharged from LH went home, either straight from LH or from the LH flat for new mothers |
| St Gerard's, Bishopton | 199* | 98 (2 privately by aunt) | 78 | 6 | 14 | | 3 | 49% | 5 married, 2 of which the father and all kept baby; 1 mother died pre-birth; most went home, with 3 to living in job with baby and 1 to flat in Dundee; *1 woman admitted for temporary shelter with her 3 children – no birth and not included in numbers admitted |
| Haig Ferguson Home, Edinburgh (1970-71 only) | 76 | 53 | 20 | 1 | | | | 70% | 1 married woman left to return to husband; 1 woman returned to the Andrew Duncan clinic; ⁹ one mother discharged with baby despite 1 st baby dying from suspected maltreatment |
| Richmondhill House, Aberdeen | 128 | 61 | 45 | 15 | | | 2 (twins) | 48% | 1 adoptive mother came to learn mothercraft; 3 admitted with babies and/or 5 yr old for 1-3 months; 1 baby in special care |
| Claremont | 176 | 121 | 38 | 17 | 1 | 1 | 1 | 69% | 5 who left before baby born got |

⁹ The Andrew Duncan Clinic was a psychiatric unit which is now part of the Royal Edinburgh Hospital.

| | | | | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------------|-----|-----|----|----|---|--|---|-----|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Park, Edinburgh | | | | | | | | | married |
| St Ronan's, Dundee (1970- 71 only) | 62* | 33 | 25 | 3 | | | | 53% | 1 who left married father; 1 baby taken from mother and given to father; 1 divorcé came to home for a month with 10 mo. baby |
| Levenhall, Musselburgh | 61 | 42 | 13 | 5 | 1 | | 1 | 69% | 1 baby adopted by grandparents; 4 left to marry putative father |
| Atholl House, Glasgow | 196 | 107 | 65 | 21 | | | | 55% | 13 women living with or marrying putative father; 2 extra marital affairs – 1 husband refused baby so adopted, other took her home; 2 putative father already married, one helped maintain mother and baby; 1 grandmother wanting to adopt baby |

Notes: Not all homes distinguished between fostering and adoption and some records were unclear, so these figures have been grouped together for clarity. The quantity and type of 'other information' also varied by home. Records for St. Gerard's Bishopton ended in July 1972. Figures from other homes include Jan 1970-December 1972.

Source: Glasgow Caledonian University (GCU) Archives, One Parent Families Scotland.

Regime

The regime in the Mother and Baby homes is difficult to determine and probably varied considerably between providers and over time as different matrons held different priorities. However, for the most part, the regime in the Mother and Baby Homes does not appear to have been intentionally punitive, although some women found it so. Only snapshots remain from different home operators. The Salvation Army maintains that the regime in all its homes would have been similar due to the structure of the organisation. The Women's Social Work (WSW) wing was in charge of the Mother and Baby Homes, as well as other social work centres. It operated as a self-contained unit, but under strict, written guidelines that sought to standardise every area of work undertaken by the WSW. The Salvation Army's *Orders and Regulations for Social Offices (Women)*, from 1916 stated that 'In exceptional cases, however, it will be found desirable to procure adopting parents for homeless children. These may be – (i) Orphans and (ii) The illegitimate children of women who have been taken charge of by The Army, and who are unable to bear the burden of their support. All such cases must be the exception and not the rule...'³¹ The WSW Supervision was regular and senior officers regularly visited the homes. The regulations, and indeed the ethos of the Salvation Army, were to provide non-judgemental care and support for the women and their baby. Interviews with former residents confirm the non-punitive regime and the fact that Officers' did not try and force adoption, even in later years, although adoption rates did still increase.³²

Lansdowne House, the Church of Scotland's Glasgow Home, was also non-punitive, as evidenced by the regular return of former residents to the Home to visit the matron and who often brought their baby with them. If their experience had been in any way unpleasant, it is unlikely that they would have returned or maintained contact with the matron.³³ Adoption was never formally part of their social policy, but adoption rates in their Home increased in the late 1930s, with nearly half the babies born in the Home in 1939 being adopted, while in 1940 just over one-third of babies born went home with their mother.³⁴ The rising adoption rates then and post war may simply relate to the women's individual circumstance. Moreover, the fact that the women frequently maintained contact with the matron suggests that she probably encouraged the women to make their own decisions rather than trying to impose her will upon the client. Family pressures to have a baby adopted may also have contributed to rising adoption rates.

Less is known about the regimes in other homes. However, blog posts by women who were resident in St Gerard's Mother and Baby Home in Bishopton during the late 1960s suggest that the women were well treated, despite a fairly strict regime and sometimes being expected to work in the laundry.³⁵ The Good Shepherd nuns who operated the home also operated a complex which included the Dalbeth Approved School and St Euphrasia's Training Centre which operated a laundry. The women in these different homes did not mix. Some women remembered their time at St Gerard's fondly, particularly the friendships made and the care provided by the nuns, while others found the regime punitive.³⁶ At St Ronan's in Dundee, some women felt pressurized to put their baby up for adoption.³⁷ It is unclear whether these accounts are the exception or the rule. However, what is clear from the blog posts and testimonies of women who were in the Mother and Baby Homes during the 1960s and 1970s, as well as the records of One Parent Families, Scotland, was that family support was central to their being able to keep their baby. Familial pressures could also persuade or force a young mother to put her baby up for adoption. Hence, the role of Mother and Baby Homes in adoption is complex because it is unclear whether families were influencing the

Home's actions. Moreover, the lack of available information has left many women and children needing help to resolve their past in relation to adoption. Only when a full investigation is made of Scottish Mother and Baby Homes and adoption in Scotland, particularly during the 1960s and 1970s, will the full relationship between Mother and Baby Homes and adoption become clear.

In 1973, the Annual Report of the Scottish Council for Single Parents noted that at end of that year, there were seven Mother and Baby homes in Scotland with a total of 104 beds; compared with 12 homes and 242 beds in July 1969 when survey started.³⁸ This was also the year of the Council's name change from the Scottish Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child. The latter was deemed no longer appropriate or reflective of the services provided. By this time too, the Mother and Baby Homes were struggling to find suitable staff to run the homes. Both the Homes and the Scottish Council for Single Parents were noting the need for more flexibility in helping single parents. By this time too, social attitudes towards unmarried mothers had changed and greater state support was available for a woman seeking to keep her child, but who did not have the support of her family or that of the putative father.

Conclusion

While Scottish attitudes towards unmarried women and their children have changed considerably during the course of the twentieth century, there is not, nor has there been, a consistent 'Scottish' attitude towards childbirth outside of marriage. The regional patterns of acceptance or judgement of the unwed mother and her children have persisted through the centuries. While overall, social attitudes in Scotland are more accepting of both the unwed mother and her child today than they were one hundred year ago, moral codes and associated pressures still remain in some families.

For the first three quarters of the twentieth century, Mother and Baby Homes provided shelter and healthcare for both unmarried mothers and their children and formed part of the complex matrix of health and welfare provision in Scotland. However, by the late 1960s the Homes struggled for staff, while the group of women for whom the Homes had been planned, no longer wanted to or had a social or financial need to utilize Mother and Baby Homes. The patchwork of surviving records from Scottish Mother and Baby Homes suggests that by the time the homes closed in the 1970s and 1980s, about half the women kept their babies, while the other half put the baby up for adoption. Those women who kept their baby usually returned home, with some marrying the putative father. However, throughout the twentieth century, family support was an important factor in enabling women to keep their baby, including for acceptance of themselves and their baby and with practical financial support.

While the regime in Mother and Baby Homes was primarily non-punitive, with staff seeking to help the mother decide her own course in life and while many women remembered fondly the care provided and the friendships formed, other women were less happy. Some of these women left the Home before the baby was born or did not return to it after giving birth. Yet for those women who returned to the Home with their baby, if they had nowhere else to go or sought independence, many of the voluntary agencies who ran the Homes also provided additional services and accommodation,

including childcare to allow the mother to work.¹⁰ Hence the experience of unmarried women having children in Scotland has been diverse and Mother and Baby Homes provided only one part or one type of experience. Further research is needed if Scotland is to fully understand the role of the Mother and Baby Home in the lives of unmarried women and their children and for those affected by adoption, to comprehend their heritage.

¹⁰ This was more common immediately after World War II.

- ¹ The term illegitimacy was removed from official discourse in 1987. The term 'illegitimate' is used in this document in the context of the time under discussion.
- ² S. Koven and S. Michel (eds), *Mothers of a New World: Maternalist Politics and the Origins of Welfare States* (London: Routledge, 1993); J. Lewis, *The Politics of Motherhood: Child and Maternal Welfare in England, 1900-1939* (London: Croom Helm, 1980), p. 35; M. Ladd-Taylor, *Mother-Work: Women, Child Welfare and the State, 1890-1930* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1994).
- ³ J. Greenlees, 'The Peculiar and Complex Female Problem': The Church of Scotland and Health Care for Unwed Mothers, 1900-1948', in J. Greenlees and L. Bryder, *Western Maternity and Medicine, 1880-1990* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2013), 47-64, 50-52.
- ⁴ Eleanor Gordon, 'Irregular Marriage: Myth and Reality', *Journal of Social History*, 47, 2 (2013), 507-25.
- ⁵ Pat Thane, *Happy Families: History and Family Policy* (London: British Academy, 2010), 20.
- ⁶ Gordon, 'Irregular Marriage', 515. For a rebuttal of cohabitation, see Rebecca Probert and Samantha Callan, *History and Family: Setting the Records Straight*, A rebuttal to the British Academy pamphlet, *Happy Families?* (London, Centre for Social Justice, 2011).
- ⁷ Morison Report, Evidence of Andrew Froude, *Registrar General of Scotland*, as cited in Gordon, 'Irregular Marriage', 514.
- ⁸ Andrew Blaikie, 'Scottish Illegitimacy: Social Adjustment or Moral Economy?', *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 28-9, 2 (Autumn, 1998), 221-41.
- ⁹ Pat Thane, 'Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England', *Women's History Review*, 20, 1 (2011), 11-29, 22.
- ¹⁰ Ginger Frost, "'Revolting to Humanity": Oversights, Limitations and Complications of the English Legitimacy Act of 1926', *Women's History Review*, 20, 1 (2011), 31-46.
- ¹¹ Blaikie, 'Scottish Illegitimacy', 229-30.
- ¹² Thane, 'Unmarried Motherhood', 21.
- ¹³ Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?: Unmarried Motherhood in Twentieth-Century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 89.
- ¹⁴ S. Weir, *A Study of Unmarried Mothers and their Children in Scotland*, Scottish Health Studies Series, 13 (Edinburgh, 1970), 86.
- ¹⁵ L. Jamieson, 'Changing Intimacy: Seeking and Forming Couple Relationships', in L. Abrams and C. G. Brown, eds., *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010), ch. 3.
- ¹⁶ For a brief discussion of illegitimacy statistics, see Callum Brown, 'Charting Everyday Experience, in Lynn Abrams and Callum G. Brown, *A History of Everyday Life in Twentieth-Century Scotland* (Edinburgh University Press, 2010), 19-47, 20-23.
- ¹⁷ Explanations for this are unclear, but it could well relate to the greater ease of abortions in the Aberdeen area.
- ¹⁸ *Registrar General for Scotland, Annual Reports*, various years.
- ¹⁹ M. G. A. Wilson, 'Two Decades of 'Legal' Abortion in Scotland: A Spatio-temporal Analysis', *Scottish Geographical Journal*, 116, 1 (2000), 1-23, esp. 10-11.
- ²⁰ For more on these differences, see: Pat Thane, *The Foundations of the Welfare State* (London and New York: Longman, 1982); G. McLachlan (ed.), *Improving the Common Weal: Aspects of Scottish Health Services, 1900-1984* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1984), pp. 413-30; Jacqueline Jenkinson, *Scotland's Health, 1919-48* (London: Peter Lang, 2002), pp. 153-219. Long-term, however, Scotland did enjoy health improvements. See M. McCrae, *The National Health Service in Scotland: Origins and Ideals, 1900-19560* (East Linton: Tuckwell Press, 2003).
- ²¹ A. K. Chalmers, *The Health of Glasgow, 1818-1925, An Outline* (Glasgow: Glasgow Corporation, 1930), p. 195.
- ²² Jenkinson, *Scotland's Health*, 259.
- ²³ Jenkinson, *Scotland's Health*, 171.
- ²⁴ Jenkinson, *Scotland's Health*, 212, 214.
- ²⁵ However, there are indications that boarding out might also have happened in parts of England.
- ²⁶ Adoption (Scotland) Act 1978. <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1978/28/section/1>.
- ²⁷ Thane and Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints?*, 107.
- ²⁸ Thane, 'Unmarried Motherhood', 21.
- ²⁹ Dr Dorothy Taylor, as quoted in V. Wimperis, 'The Unmarried Mother and Her Child', p. 237
- ³⁰ John Bowlby, *Maternal Care and Mental Health* (WHO, 1951).
- ³¹ The Salvation Army, *Order and Regulations for Social Officers (Women)*, 1916, p. 171.

³² Interviews conducted by the Salvation Army and held at their International Heritage Centre, London. Information provided by Major Kevin Pooley, Social Historian of the Salvation Army.

³³ Greenlees, 'Peculiar and Complex Female Problem'; *Annual Reports of the Committee on Social Work to the General Assembly of the Church of Scotland*, various years, eg. 1929, p. 799; *Report of the Committee on Social Service*, 1957, 311-12.

³⁴ Greenlees, 'Complex and Peculiar Female Problem', 58.

³⁵ <http://www.talkingscot.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=36&t=7091&start=10> [last accessed 29 Oct. 2015]

³⁶ <http://discuss.glasgowguide.co.uk/index.php?showtopic=20368> [last accessed 29 Oct, 2015] and

<http://www.talkingscot.com/forum/viewtopic.php?f=36&t=7091&start=10>

³⁷ <http://www.dailyrecord.co.uk/news/scottish-news/cancer-mum-never-stop-looking-6050522>. July 2015 [last accessed 29 Oct. 2015]

³⁸ Glasgow Caledonian University Archives, *Scottish Council for Single Parents, 29th Annual Report*, (Edinburgh, 1973), 16.