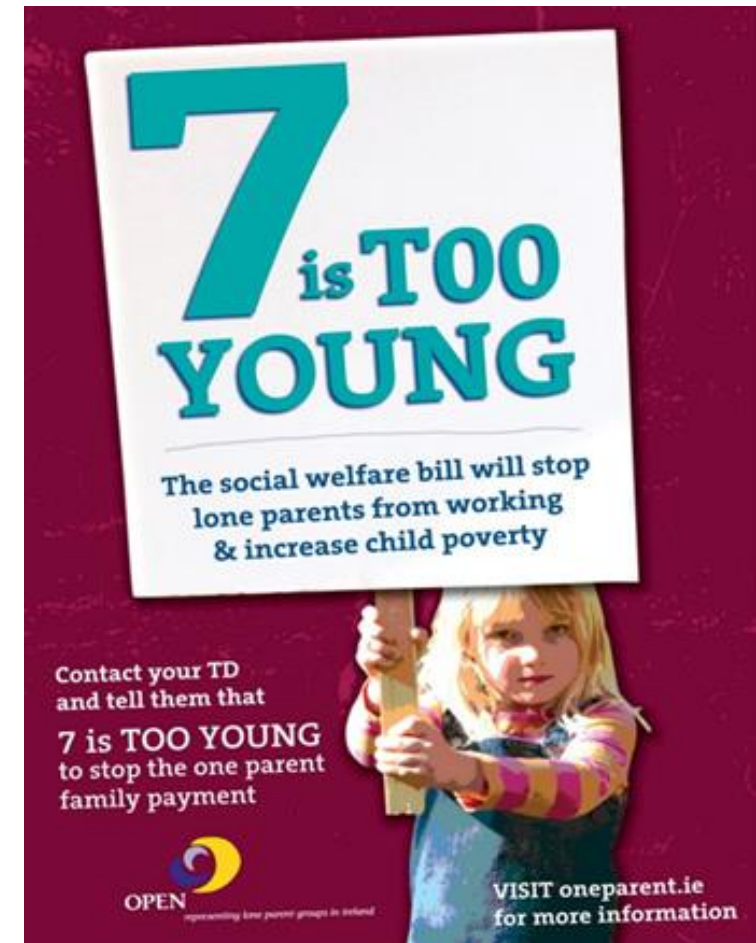


The politics of 'changing expectations': lone parents and conditionality in Ireland

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York University, 26 June 2018

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Changing expectations

- Conditionality as a project to change expectations
- Method and Data
- Pre crisis - Crisis - Post crisis
- Work like a man, care like a woman
- Link between poverty, vulnerability and homelessness
- Post crisis family homelessness
- Homelessness and market led social housing policy
- Shift to refocus expectations regarding work and housing

Method and Data collection

Lone parents employment conditionality

- 2012-2018
- Policy analysis
- Tracking & participant observation
- National Expert Group on Social Welfare & Taxation (2011-14)
- Key informant interviews

Lone parents and homelessness

- PACHRCA method
- 10 homeless families over 10 weeks
- PAR Voice/Action – Dialogue
- Policy publication & parliamentary committee.

Pre Crisis: Supporting Lone Parents (DSP 2006)

- High lone parent & child poverty, expenditure (€1b+), Lisbon 75%
- Aim - Increase numbers lone parents in FT employment
- Creation of new payment - right to parent (PT) child under 7 - lone parents and coupled women
- JSA for lone parents with child 7+ full time work - not for partnered women –
- Non-coercive supportive conditionality/sensitive activation
- Specific childcare schemes and programmes
- Significant DSP consultation - broadly welcomed
- Incentive reinforcement – individualisation – less focus on cohabitation
- Crisis -New Parenting Allowance abandoned
- Qualified adults earned income disregard calibrated to JSAs in 2007 but political nerves – wifely labour
- Lone parents reform still on the agenda

Crisis – 2008-2014

- Policy intent - 2010 Single Working Age Payment - levelling down income disregards
- Tackling working age welfare dependency, increase numbers lone parents in (full time) employment, but needed increased out of home childcare supports
- Staged transfer of lone parents from One Parent Family Payment to Job Seeker's Allowance, + childcare schemes
- New Pathways to Work 2011, 2013. Work first oriented job search assistance, new sanctions 25% welfare payment
- Political resistance - significant DSP consultation - not welcomed
- Troika – opportunity for reform or pressure for reform – understood too much change but political system holds on financial cuts
- Decreased level of generosity regarding earned income disregards and eligibility for double payments. 2012-2016
- Lone parents with children 7+ move to JSA and more coercive intervention

S.P.A.R.K
Single Parents Acting for the Rights of Our Kids

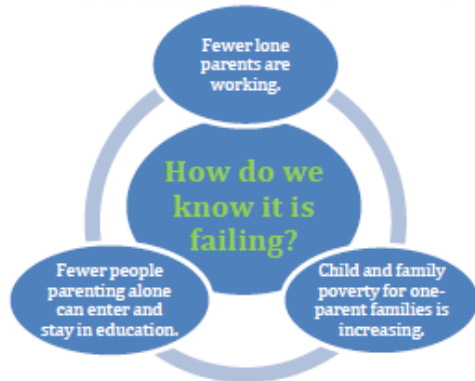
REVERSE LONE PARENT CUTS NO TO CHILD POVERTY

**PROTEST WEDNESDAY JUNE 10TH,
3.30PM DAIL GATES**

On July 2nd thousands of lone parents and their children will be pushed further into poverty as the One Parent Family Payment will cease when a child is seven.
These measures are being implemented without the promised childcare. Parents in part-time or low paid work are being forced out of work with these changes. The poverty and homeless rates for lone parent families must end.
There is no recovery or equality for lone parent families.
Please share and tweet your support at #YesChildEqualityJune10.
Email a one minute video clip of your support to sparkinland@gmail.com
Protest organised by SPARK

Lone Parents and Activation, What Works and Why: A Review of the International Evidence in the Irish Context

Cart before the horse



What is One Family calling for?

PAUSE

- PAUSE rollout of the reform so that the underlying problems outlined here can be addressed.
- Reform should only progress if it can be properly resourced so it can be successful for one-parent families.

7 is TOO YOUNG

The social welfare bill will stop lone parents from working & increase child poverty

Contact your TD and tell them that 7 is TOO YOUNG to stop the one parent family payment

OPEN representing lone parent groups in Ireland
VISIT oneparent.ie for more information

Opposition to changes but gendered mobilisation weakened over crisis.

Partial roll back of policy but overall intent intact

Some policy innovation

Post crisis – ‘permanent crisis’

Political kickbacks

Feminist agency and gendered mobilisation

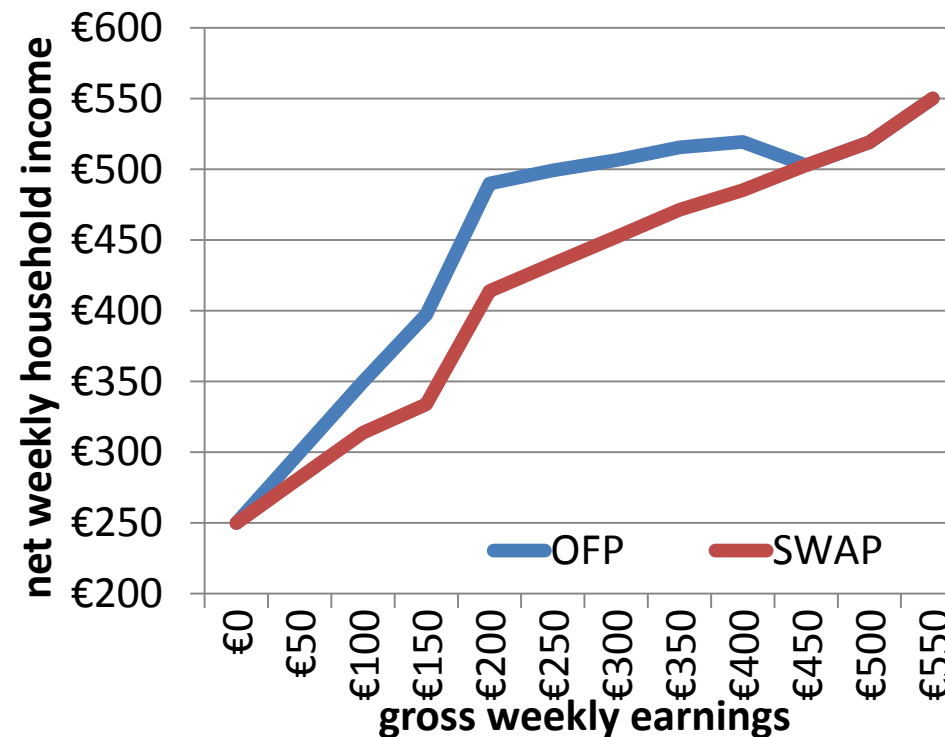
- ✓ ‘Seven is too Young’ campaign
- ✓ Single Parents Acting for Our Kids (SPARK)

- Child 7-14, Job Seeker Transition- less conditions and more flexible WLB options
- Income disregards partially restored to OFP and JST - not other 15,000

- More coercive reinforcement and work first oriented job search assistance. LP’s 14+ in activation process

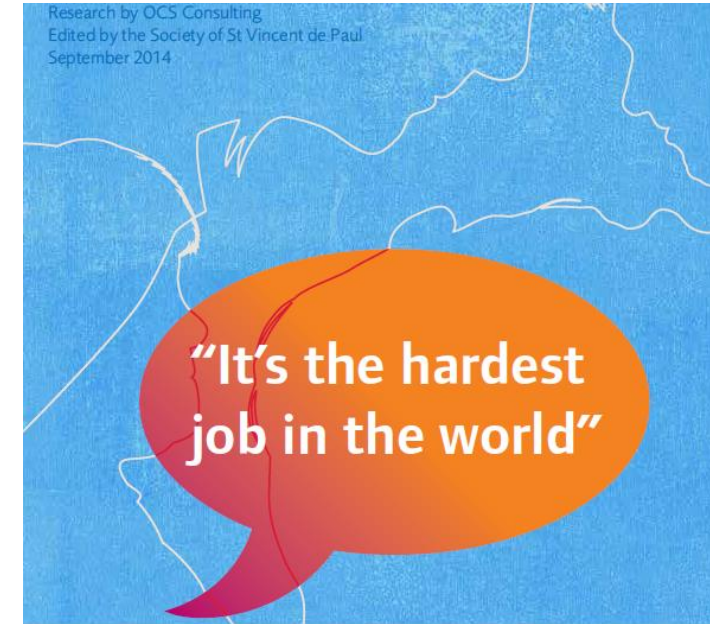
Limited after-schools schemes funded by cut in universal CB

Clear aim to promote full time work



Review 'political condition' of legislation

- Indecon 2017 – marginally more in employment but also more in deprivation poverty -
- Positive impact in reducing poverty of the percentage who were able to obtain full-time employment - opposite for those with no employment or low part-time employment earnings
- 52% of individuals who lost OFP in 2015 faced no loss in total incomes, while 48% experienced a loss in income.
- 23% of individuals affected indicated that the changes improved their sense of wellbeing but 43% indicated that this had worsened. Similarly, 21% suggested the changes had improved their children's wellbeing while 40% suggested this had declined.



**Indecon Independent Review of the
Amendments to the One-parent Family
Payment since January 2012**

Presented to

**Department of Employment Affairs and Social
Protection**

Prepared by

Indecon Research Economists

Indecon

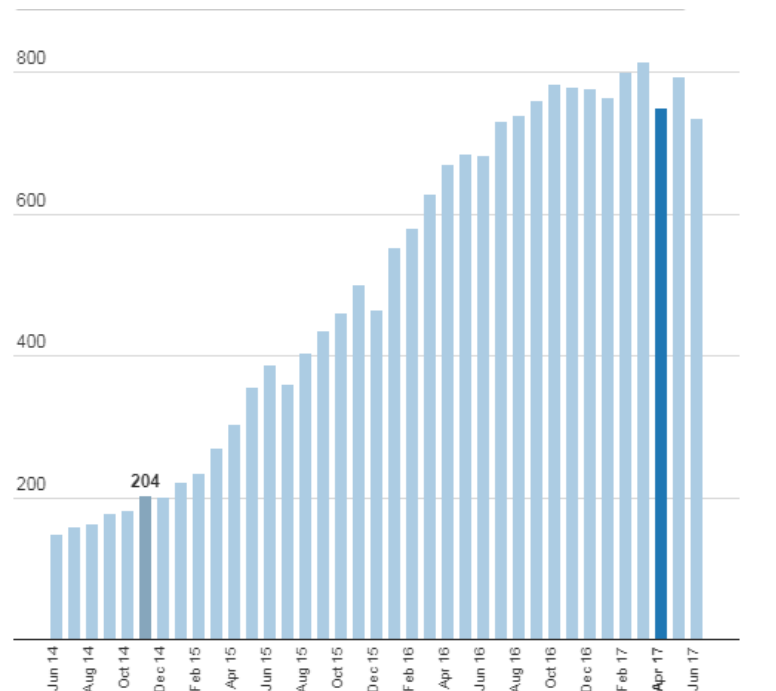
Changing expectations

Work like man ... care like a woman ... vulnerability

- Policy regime as attempt to influence transition traps, lone parents over incentivised to work part time, disincentivising part time for full time -
- Labour activation of couple mothers a 'medium term' policy objective
- Target LPs 'nesting' in part time work options, supported by welfare
- issue of childcare and WLB
- significant poverty 60% deprivation
- stigma and public discourse
- lone parent less benefit from the economic recovery (barriers to employment and challenge combining work/sole care)

Vulnerability, poverty, homelessness and lone parents

- poverty-related causes of homelessness impact disproportionately on lone parent families.
- conditionality rule contributed to their homelessness



- The majority in emergency accommodation - last previous home in the private rental sector.
- Rising rent levels, inability to meet rising rents, rental subsidies not linked to real rents, wages too low, reduced income due to welfare cuts or job loss, cost-of-living increases
- Landlord selling or using property for own family.
- Family unable to find alternative accommodation, v. limited supply & high rents.
- 'New family formations',
- Data underestimates 'domestic violence'

2015-2018

- 10000 homeless, 3500 children
- Of the 976 families new to homelessness in 2017 – two thirds (627) were headed by lone parents -24% general population
- Shift from social housing strategy to family ‘hubs’ - therapeutic incarceration, institutionalisation, infantilisation (Mayock 2017)
- Licences, behavioural requirements – move to private rental. conduct of conduct

- Discourse of Responsibilisation
- Maternalisation – protect the vulnerable
- Myth - holding out for state housing - gaming
- Rule changes to diminish ‘choice’ and to impose ‘reasonable’ offers
- Problem of ‘supply’ reframed as problem of ‘demand’
- Lone parents the problem – referendum



Conclusion – conditions as a way of lowering expectations, changing behaviours, reducing choices..

- Link between shift to more conditional welfare
- Increased poverty and vulnerability
- Greater risk of homelessness and shift to more behavioural regime
- Policy regime works to 'lower expectations' in both parenting, employment and housing
- Unintentional but co-ordinated regime valuing 'people who get up in the morning'
- Issue of visibility of lone parents – now JSA and not counted in homeless data DEASP - 80,000-40,000
- Issue of unequal treatment vis a vis coupled mothers
- Issue of intersectional conditionality – JSA/Homeless/Addiction/Probation (Finn & Healy '18)
- Oct 2018 new referendum (s) 'woman's place in the home'