



One Parent Families Scotland

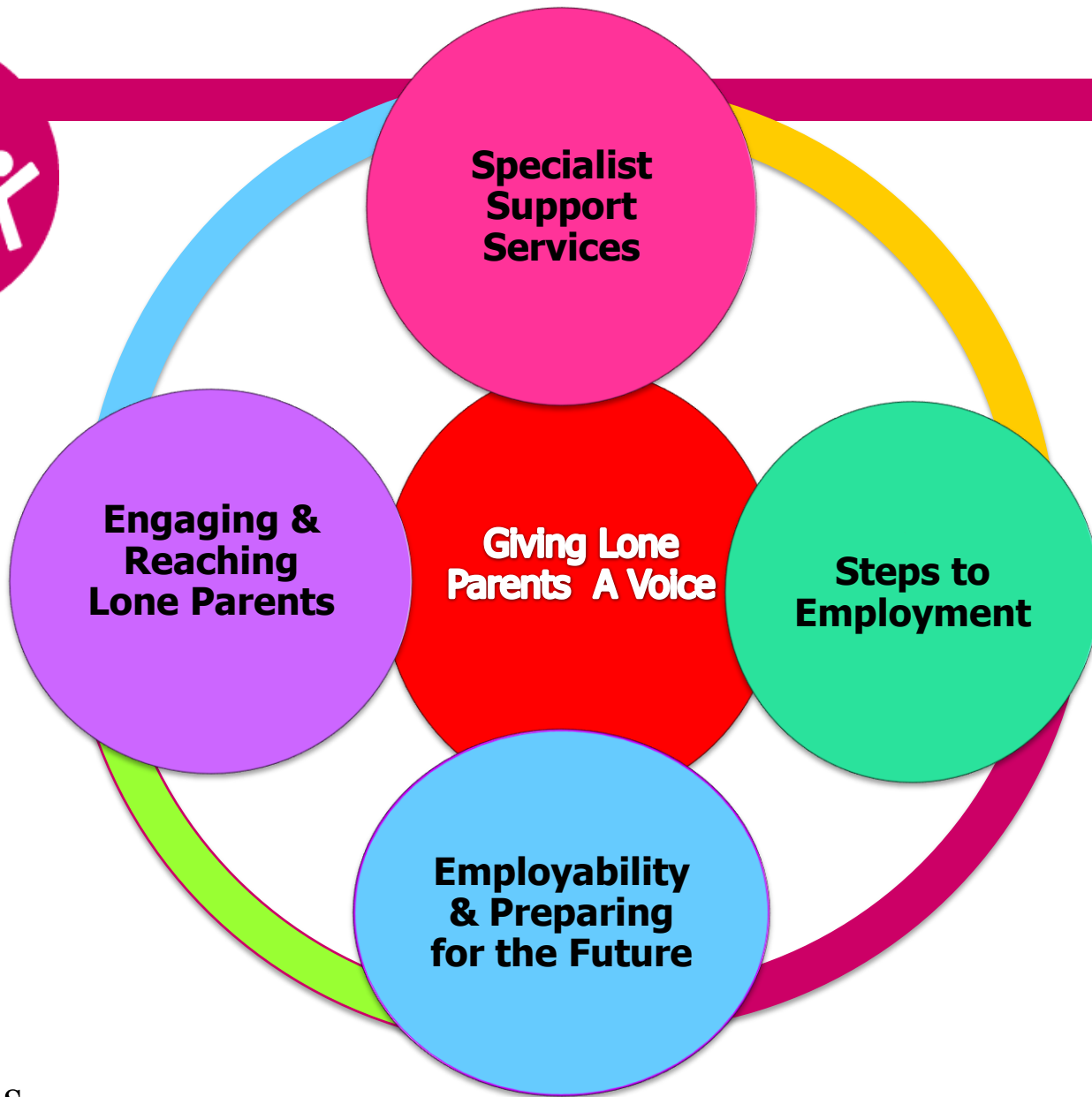
Welfare Reform & the Childcare Gap

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Outline

- OPFS
- The Poverty Challenge
- Lone Parent Challenge
- The National Policy Context
- Welfare Reform
- Strategic Concerns
- Recommendations



Choices



The Child Poverty Challenge

- 1 in 4 children in Scotland officially recognised as poor.
50% are in one parent families
- Progress stalled child poverty levels static/increasing
- Poverty not confined to families on benefit
- Half of all children in poverty live in families where at least one adult is in paid work.



Lone Parent Challenge

- 174,000 LPs, 24% of families
- forecast 38% of families by 2024.
- 52% in poorest 10% areas but 9% in 10% least deprived.
- Employment rate 56.3 %, other mothers 71.7 %
- 66% on income of less than £15,000
- Over 70,000 Lone Parents claim I S or IB
- Twice as likely to leave job as other newly employed people



UK Policy Agenda

- Prior to credit crunch, “worklessness” high on agenda
- Govt wanted to reduce claimant count ; cut public spend; create more effective labour supply ; reduce child poverty
- Recession challenges this but
- Govt Strategic approach remains unchanged



Strategies

Westminster: A New Deal for Welfare

- Reform “Inactive Benefits” ; increasing conditionality;
- Focus on sick, disabled lone parents and over 50’s
- Flexible New Deal: Prime Contractor Model

Scottish Government: take a “whole government” approach

- Workforce Plus / Skills Strategy/MCMC
- Early Years Framework;
- Equally Well (Health Inequalities Framework)
- Achieving our Potential (Anti-Poverty Framework)

Both-Integrating Employment & Skills (JCP & SDS)



Strategic Concerns

- Fundamental right of parents to act in best interests of the child
- JSA -sufficiently flexible to reflect complexity of LP's lives ?
- Sanctions – concern about effects on children
- Scotland's differing institutional landscape – childcare
- Over 25,000 lone parents with children 7yrs & above
- Over 50,000 school-age children affected
- Hayton report (Communities Committee) – childcare gap
- Short – term effects of recession (falling demand?)



Policy Recommendations

- Individ.Worker /Carer Model to replace “Adult Worker Model”
- Childcare: introduce legislative requirement on LA’s
- The poorest parents should be able to claim up to 100% of their childcare costs through tax credits
- Central Government should increase the run-on period for the childcare element of Working Tax Credit when you lose your job from four to twelve weeks.
- Government should create a fund for local authorities to draw on in order to protect childcare places which are at risk.



A welfare system to protect people from poverty

Scottish Campaign on Welfare Reform (40 + orgs)

Campaign promotes 4 key principles

- Dignified
- Supportive
- Adequate resources
- Scotland's institutional framework recognised

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