



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Changing Families,
Changing Food.

Photograph: Alex Morrice

ABERDEEN PUBLIC SOUP KITCHEN

(No) family (No) food

Principal Investigator

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Co-applicant

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Summary

This project will use food as lens in which to understand the constructions of relationships of care with the aim of exploring the relationships between staff and service users, and amongst service users, of supported housing for homeless people. It will expand on a previous study conducted in the mid-nineties in a hostel for homeless people located in a Scottish city (Smith 1997), which found that service users and staff use food to construct fictive kin and family relationships. The study also indicated that food and feeding amongst staff and service users were underpinned by a number of ideological perspectives, including those that

were reminiscent of earlier formulations of the deserving poor, the family as shelter in a hostile world, food as charity, as well as more recent developments including the provision of food as dividing professional bodies from clients' bodies.

This new study seeks to examine these findings further and in light of the recent developments in the provision of accommodation for homeless people by using memories of food as a key way of exploring relationships within supported housing for homeless people.

Royal Holloway
University of London

The Leverhulme Trust

www.sheffield.ac.uk/familiesandfood

Research questions

- What role do changing constructions of food and family play in the relationships between service users, staff and volunteers of supported housing for homeless people?
- What are the changing connections between food, family and ideology (including body/self image and charity) in the narrated memories of service users, staff and volunteers of supported housing for homeless people?



Photograph: www.allnations.org.uk/projects/project06

Research design

The project will collect and analyse oral history and semi-structured interviews with service users, staff and volunteers of supported housing for homeless people and re-analyse the earlier and similar set of interviews from the project conducted in the mid-1990s.

The 'Changing Families, Changing Food' Programme

'*Changing Families, Changing Food*' is a major inter-disciplinary research programme, funded by The Leverhulme Trust. The Programme began in October 2005 and will run for just over three years.

It is organised into three research strands on: pregnancy and motherhood; childhood and family life; and family and community. Focusing on contemporary Britain, the Programme also includes some international comparisons and a 'time-line' to establish the quantitative and qualitative nature of social changes affecting families and food over the last century.

The Programme is coordinated by Peter Jackson (Director of Research for the Social Sciences at Sheffield University) and is based in ICoSS (the University's new social science facility). The Programme involves colleagues from Clinical Sciences, East Asian Studies, Geography, Nursing and Midwifery, the School for Health and Related Research and Sociological Studies at Sheffield in collaboration with colleagues in Health and Social Care at Royal Holloway, University of London.

The research takes food as the lens through which to observe recent changes in family life and examines how changes in family form have affected patterns of food consumption. The Programme's findings are expected to contribute to current debates about obesity and nutrition, media and consumption, food choice and deprivation.

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