



The
University
Of
Sheffield.

Changing Families,
Changing Food.

Making healthy families

Principal Investigator

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Summary

The project aims to identify and explore:

- assumptions about family forms and practices that underlie and inform the activities of health practitioners delivering food-related interventions; and
- how these are received and experienced by family members who participate on food-related interventions.

The project looks at a variety of food-related interventions in a range of settings provided for people living in diverse family contexts.



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The Leverhulme Trust

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Research questions

- What are practitioners' (in managerial, professional and support roles) conceptualisations of 'family' and a 'healthy family'? How are these located within broader social contexts including family form and social class?
- How do practitioners, across a range of disciplines and settings, perceive family processes and dynamics as they relate to the development and maintenance of the 'healthy family'?
- How do such conceptualisations and perceptions inform practitioners' interactions with families and their practice in relation to food and dietary advice?
- What are family members' views and experiences, concerning interactions with practitioners who offer food and dietary-related interventions and advice?
- Following interventions, do family members identify any specific ways in which they are integrating new practices into their family life or do they appear to be modifying previously held understandings about families, health and food?



Research design

This will be a mixed-method study, combining in-depth, individual interviews with observation of community-based initiatives and interventions relating to food and health. Interviews will be conducted with team leaders, practitioners and family members. Periods of observation will focus particularly on the various understandings of family that inform interactions between practitioners and family members in food-related interventions.

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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