

## “My second mum and dad”

The involvement of grandparents in  
the lives of teenage grandchildren.

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## Acknowledgments

This report is based on further analyses of data collected for an ESRC study (research grant 000-22-2283). Dr Eirini Flouri of the Institute of Education was a co-applicant for the original ESRC study. Drs Jo-Pei Tan and Shalhevet Attar-Schwartz contributed to many of the findings mentioned here.

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This research was produced for Grandparents Plus. The original research was undertaken by a team at University of Oxford and supported by ESRC grant 000-22-2283. This surveyed a nationally representative sample of 1566 young people aged 11-16 in schools around England and Wales. In addition 40 of these teenagers took part in-depth interviews. This report is based on further analysis, in particular of data on grandparents, which was collected in the original survey and interviews.

# Main findings



## Grandparents were involved and had a significant, positive impact on young people

- **There were high levels of involvement from all grandparents although the maternal grandmother was generally the most active.** Some of the activities undertaken are those more traditionally associated with parenting. This involvement encompassed: going to school events; talking about problems and future plans; giving advice; money and presents and playing a role in discipline. The vast majority of grandchildren respected the help they received from grandparents. Some children maintained contact with grandparents through email, telephone and the internet.
- **Grandparental involvement was associated with ‘more considerate and sensitive’ young people.** The two strongest findings of the study were first the relationship between being close to a grandparent and pro-social behaviour in young people. This closeness was significantly associated with more sensitive young people who were considerate of others’ feelings and more willing to help others. Secondly, where grandparents were actively involved they had a positive impact on child adjustment. Being ‘close’ to grandchildren was not enough, grandparents had to get ‘stuck in’. Interviews with some of the children showed how they did this; going to school events, helping with homework, helping the young people plan their careers, acting as ‘cheerleaders’ for their achievements.
- **High levels of grandparental involvement in single parent families were linked to fewer adjustment difficulties for the children** in these families, having a greater positive impact on their adjustment than for those children in coupled families.

# Young people sought out their grandparents at times of family adversity

- **When families were experiencing difficulties, young people sought emotional and other support from their closest grandparent and this support improved their well-being. Those without it had more adjustment problems.** The 1566 young people in the survey reported high levels of family adversities that had occurred in the last year: death in the family (36%), saw a crime or accident (37%), mental health problems (14%), family member had drug/alcohol problem (10%) even parents in trouble with the law (4%) and parents in prison (2%). More than three quarters of the young people had experienced two or more adversities in the last year and over one third (37%) had experienced five or more. Young people were significantly more likely to talk about their problems with their closest grandparent when they were under pressure from multiple family adversities (5+); likewise in these situations they were more likely to share things with closest grandparent that they would not share with parents. Closeness to a grandparent at times of family adversity appeared to protect children from adjustment problems.

## But parents were often the gatekeepers

- **The grandparental relationship with the parents was critical in ensuring an ongoing relationship with grandchildren.** Most grandparents had good relationships with parents. Positive relationships were generally associated with living locally (more than two thirds of the grandparents lived in the same town or within 10 miles). More than a quarter of maternal grandparents were still working but this did not impact on the relationship with parents. The strongest factor impacting on the grandparent-parent relationship was whether or not grandparents had divorced. Generally parents had significantly poorer relationships with divorced grandparents.
- **Divorce in either parents' or grandparents' relationships had a negative impact on whether grandchildren were actively encouraged to keep in contact.** Children whose parents had divorced were less likely to be encouraged to maintain contact with paternal grandparents (Dad's mum and dad), whilst those with divorced grandparents were less likely to be in contact with their (separated) grandfathers (Mum's dad or Dad's dad).

# However young people were prepared to assert their right to have contact

- **They didn't think in terms of grandparents' rights but regarded it as their right to maintain contact with their grandparents in the event of conflict, separation or divorce.** They wanted contact with grandparents because they played a big part in their lives; they were part of the family; it was not their fault if parents rowed with grandparents. Grandparents could, if necessary, act as protectors if their parents 'screwed up', and they would rather go to grandparents than strangers if their parents died. Some recognised, however, that not all grandparents were good news and in the final analysis grandchildren should have the choice about whether to involve them or not.
- **Teenagers thought that grandparents should be informed but not directly involved in court cases.** When it came to involving grandparents in court cases teenagers were pragmatic. Some felt because they were family it might be helpful but others could see there could be problems. Grandparents could not stop parents getting divorced - it was not their problem. They were concerned that each grandparent would support their side of the family and this could lead to conflict.



# Grandparents and their teenage grandchildren



With changing families, increased life expectancy, growing numbers of dual-worker households and higher rates of family breakdown, grandparents are now playing an increasing role in their grandchildren's lives. In everyday families, grandparents are sacrificing, more than ever before, increasing amounts of time, energy and money to help their children ride crises of family life and ensure that their grandchildren are as well prepared as they can be for the challenges they will face as they grow up. Despite this, grandparents are almost invisible on the public agenda.

This study elicits the views of young people. The results were surprising. Far from their grandparents being the distant authority figures of yesteryear, the young people reported that their grandparents were heavily involved in their lives. Although very few had full-time responsibility for their grandchildren, most grandparents were informally filling the parenting gap, after school and during the holidays.

### **The study**

This is the first national study of young people to talk about their relationships with their grandparents. The study surveyed 1566 children (aged 11-16) in schools across England and Wales and undertook in-depth interviews with 40 young people. These grandchildren had 4160 living grandparents. Further details of the study are given in the appendices.

The study sought to answer a number of key questions: who is this forgotten army of grandparents who get involved in young people's lives? What factors influence their well-being? How do they relate to the children's parents? What sort of help do they give to their grandchildren? What impact does this involvement have on the grandchildren's emotional and behavioural well-being? When is this involvement especially beneficial? What impact does getting involved have on grandparents and how do they help at times of family adversity? Finally, what do young people feel about their rights to continuing contact with grandparents?

### **Outline of the report**

Each section starts with a summary of existing evidence. These place the current study in a wider context. Most of the studies referenced are from the UK. There are nine sections. Except where mentioned, sections are based on the survey findings of the 1478 young people with living grandparents. The second section gives background details of the surviving grandparents and factors affecting their lives. Section three considers the crucial grandparent/parent relationships and factors that influence this relationship. The fourth section explores what grandparents actually do for their grandchildren. The fifth section, based on 40 interviews with the young people, suggests how grandchildren feel they are impacting on their grandparents' well-being while the sixth section, based on the survey findings, shows the links between grandparent involvement and the well-being of their grandchildren. The significant impact grandparent involvement had on young people's well-being was one of the strongest findings of the study. The seventh section demonstrates how grandparents get involved at times of family adversity. Again this finding broke new ground. The eighth section explores what young people feel about their rights for continuing contact with grandparents. All 40 children were asked about this in the interviews and the results were surprising. Finally the last section raises the policy questions arising from the findings. Appropriate quotations are given from the interviews throughout the report.

# What do we know about grandparents today?



## Existing evidence

It is estimated that there are currently 14 million Grandparents in the UK<sup>2.1</sup>. A third of the population are grandparents<sup>2.2</sup> and it is expected that around three quarters of the population will become grandparents in their lifetime<sup>2.3</sup>. Recently there has been an increase in the number of people who become grandparents and they are living longer<sup>2.4</sup>.

Because people are living longer, men and women may spend longer being grandparents (average 25 years) than being hands-on parents (18 years). Today 80% of young adults belong to families comprised of 3 or more generations or what has become known as the 'slim' or 'beanpole' family<sup>2.5</sup>. Four generation families are also becoming more common, particularly amongst working class families. These families are also amongst the poorest with higher levels of great-grandchild poverty<sup>2.6</sup>.

Our ageing population means that overall grandparents are getting older but working class women are four times more likely than middle class women to become a grandparent before their 50th birthday<sup>2.7</sup>. But grandparents are also getting poorer. The proportion of grandparents with grandchildren under 16 who are living on low incomes increased by a third between 1998 and 2007 (from 18% to 26%)<sup>2.8</sup>.

Because of the decline in family size there has been a reduction in the number of grandchildren per grandparent. In the 1950s one in five grandparents had 10 or more grandchildren while today the ratio is one in 20<sup>2.9</sup>. The mean number of grandchildren of all ages per grandparent is 4.4<sup>2.10</sup>. A recent study<sup>2.11</sup> found that grandparents showed great socio-demographic variability. The youngest grandparent interviewed was aged 37 and the oldest was aged 94 and the maximum number of grandchildren was 23. The maximum number of sets of grandchildren (that is grandchildren who live together) counted for one grandparent was 20.



## The current study

### How many grandparents does our sample of young people have?

Seventy eight young people were excluded from the analysis because they had no living grandparents and 10 because they did not complete any of the questions relating to relationships with grandparents, leaving 1478 in the sample. These young people had a total of 4160 surviving grandparents.

Most young people had three (32% of sample) or four (31%) surviving grandparents. A further quarter (25%) had two grandparents and only 13% had one.

1242 of these grandparents were maternal grandmothers, 1003 maternal grandfathers, 1082 paternal grandmothers and 833 paternal grandfathers.

Of the young people with at least one living grandparent, 84% had living maternal grandmothers and nearly three quarters had living paternal grandmothers. Rather fewer of the young people had surviving grandfathers: 68% of maternal grandfathers and 56% of paternal grandfathers.

Figure 2.1

Percentage of living grandparents by gender and lineage

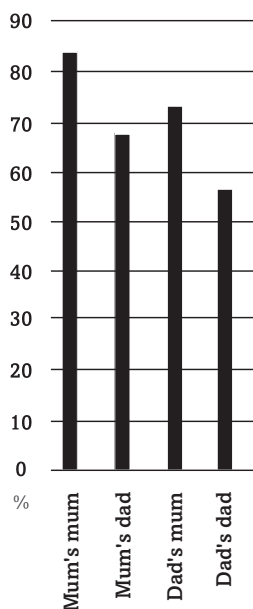
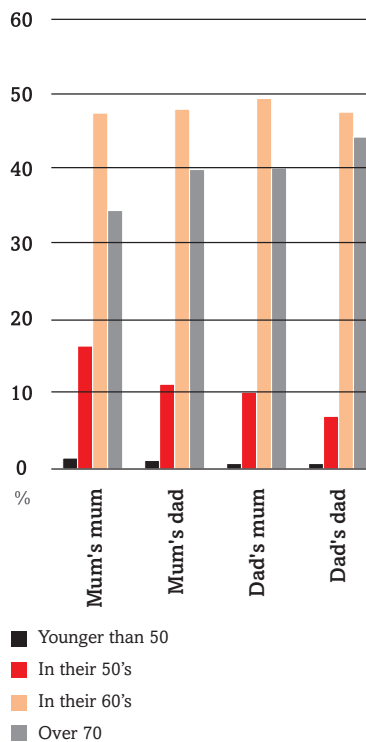


Figure 2.2

The age of teens' grandparents by gender and lineage



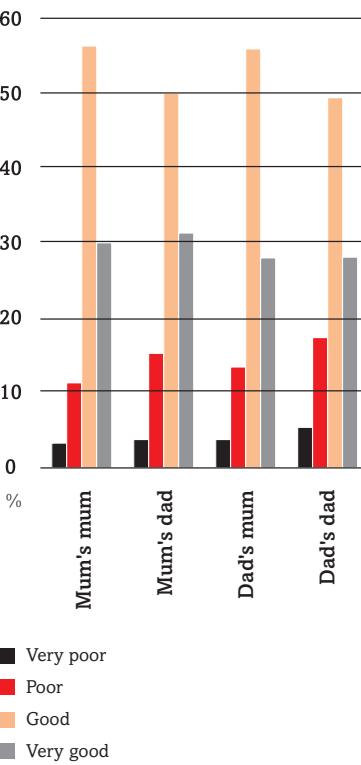
### How many grandchildren do these grandparents have?

In the study more than two thirds of all grandparents had four or more grandchildren. Only 3% had only one grandchild.

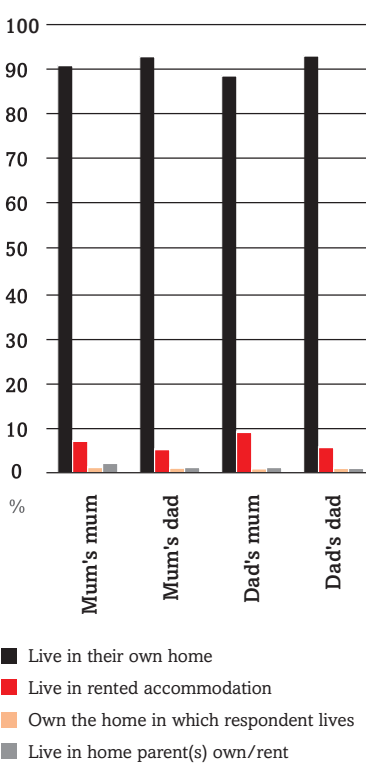
### How old are these grandparents?

Many of our teenager's grandparents would have married in their twenties and first become grandparents in their late forties or early fifties. This was confirmed by our survey. Now with teenage grandchildren most grandparents were in their sixties.

**Figure 2.3**  
The health of the grandparents by gender and lineage



**Figure 2.4**  
Houseowning grandparents by gender and lineage



**How good is the grandparents' health?**  
With better healthcare, their overall health is now better than it would have been a generation before. Although between 13% and 19% of all grandparents had poor health, young people reported that most grandparents had good or very good health. In particular, 77% of maternal grandmothers were in good health.

**How many own their own home?**  
The young people reported that around 90% of all grandparents owned their own home. Less than 1% lived with their grandchildren.

Over 80% of grandparents were married and/or remarried.

### Grandparent well-being and the factors impacting on this

Age, as might be expected, was highly significantly correlated with health in all grandparents. Older grandparents were likely to have poorer health.

It was interesting that grandparents who lived in their own homes, and who were presumably better off, were generally more likely to have better health. There is considerable evidence that older people living in poverty have poorer health care<sup>2,12</sup>. Linked to this, perhaps because they had been able to earn more in their working lives, better educated grandmothers, that is those who continued education beyond compulsory age, also had better health. These grandmothers were also more likely to own their own house. Marital status also impacted on house ownership. Grandparents who were still married (not separated or divorced) were more likely to own their home as opposed to living in rental accommodation.

Maternal Grandmothers living close to their grandchildren, in the same town or within ten miles, were significantly more likely to have better health but this did not apply to grandfathers. It may be, for Mum's mum, that contact with the grandchildren contributed to their better health.

Those grandparents who were still working, were, as might be expected, in better health.

Marital status affected the different grandparents in different ways. For Mum's Dad, by far the strongest factor to impact on his health was his marital status. Maternal grandfathers who were married were significantly more likely to be in better health. Surprisingly this did not impact to the same extent on grandmothers.

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#### Chapter 2 references

- 2.1 Broad, 2007
- 2.2 Dench and Ogg, 2002
- 2.3 Dench and Ogg, 2002
- 2.4 Dunning, 2006
- 2.5 Dench and Ogg, 2002
- 2.6 Grandparents Plus, 2009b
- 2.7 Grandparents Plus, 2009b
- 2.8 Grandparents Plus, 2009b
- 2.9 Harper, 2003; Townsend, 1957
- 2.10 Dunning, 2006
- 2.11 Clarke and Roberts, 2003
- 2.12 Dominy and Kempson, 2006

# The critical relationship with parents



## Existing evidence

Research in the United States has shown that parents act as gatekeepers<sup>3.1</sup>. Some suggest that they are the 'bridge generation'<sup>3.2</sup>, a mediator for social and emotional exchange between grandparents and grandchildren.

Traditionally there is a norm, widely accepted within the white Anglo-American societies, of 'non-interference' by grandparents in the up-bringing of their grandchildren<sup>3.3</sup>. Parents, by demonstrating that they care for grandparents set an example for grandparent-grandchild interaction<sup>3.4</sup>. In addition, parents tend to 'socialise' grandparents and grandchildren into appropriate roles and desirable behaviour related to their respective roles<sup>3.5</sup>. Thus, a parent's close relationship with a grandparent and a parent's encouragement for interaction across generations shapes and strengthens relationships between grandparents and grandchildren<sup>3.6</sup>.

Although in many states in the US and in other parts of the world grandparents have the right of visitation following parental separation or divorce, in the UK grandparents have no such rights<sup>3.7</sup>.

## The current study

### How well did grandparents get on with the parents of their grandchildren? What factors affected this relationship?

In this study too the parental relationship was crucial. As we can see below, most surviving grandparents were reported to have good or very good relationships with parents. Relationships with Mum's mum were marginally better than with other grandparents. While there were a few grandparents who had very fraught relationships with parents, the usual, normative scenario is that most grandparents get on well with parents.

Figure 3.1

Grandparents relationship with the child's parents by gender and lineage. How do they get on?

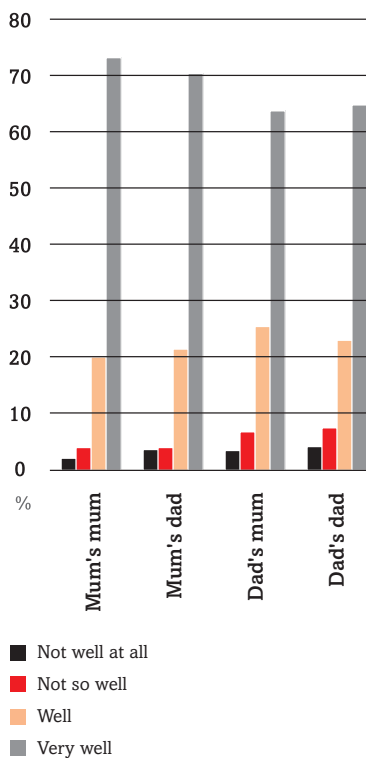
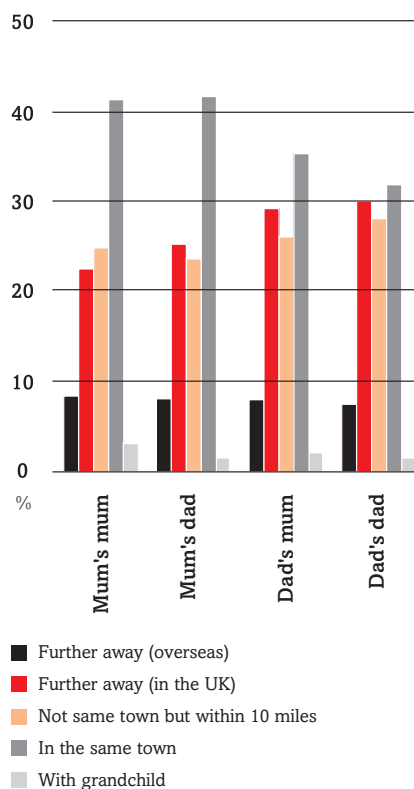


Figure 3.2

Distance grandparents live from their grandchildren by gender and lineage



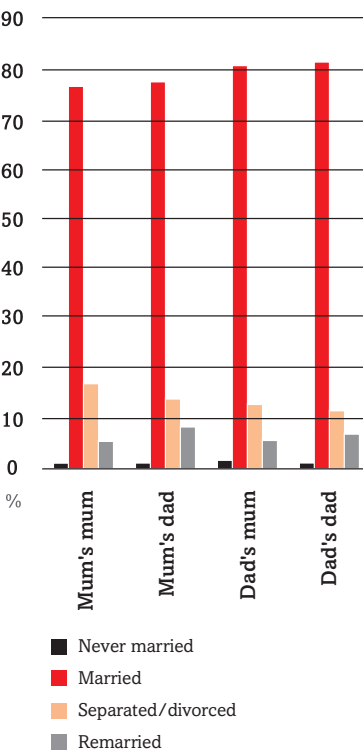
A surprising finding was more than two thirds of the grandparents lived locally - that is in the same town or within 10 miles. With the exception of Dad's Dad, grandparents who did not live locally were significantly less likely to get on well with parents.

Age did not impact on the relationship with parents, but poor grandparental health did. Highly significantly more grandparents (both maternal and paternal) with poor health had more problematic relationships with parents.

Around a quarter of grandparents, in particular 28% of maternal grandmothers were still working full or part-time. It might have been expected that working grandparents would have poorer relationships with the children's parents because they are less available to help, but employment status was not a significant factor in the analysis for paternal grandparents or maternal grandmothers. For maternal grandfathers, however, there does appear to be a significant correlation between employment and having a poor relationship with the child's parents. Except for Mum's dad, grandparents who had stayed on after school to study had significantly better relationships with parents.



**Figure 3.3**  
Grandparents marital status by gender and lineage



The strongest factor impacting on grandparent-grandchild' relationships was grandparental divorce. Around a fifth of all grandparents were separated and/or divorced. Divorced grandparents generally had significantly poorer relationships with parents.

**Factors involved when children were discouraged from seeing grandparents**

Having a good relationship between parents and grandparents although crucial is not the same as the parents giving active encouragement for their children to make contact with grandparents.

Statistical analysis revealed some interesting differences between children discouraged from seeing their grandparents and the rest of the sample, but relatively few of them passed significance tests. Those that did showed considerable variation by grandparent gender and lineage.

In terms of child factors, the only significant results were for Mum's mum. In this instance both the child's age and gender proved statistically significant, with younger and female grandchildren being more likely to be encouraged to see their maternal grandmothers.

Family type proved significant, but only for paternal grandparents (Dad's mum and Dad's dad). Those children living with both their mum and their dad were more likely to be encouraged to see their dad's parents. This suggests that following divorce or remarriage children (more likely to be living with their mum than their dad) are often discouraged from seeing their fathers' parents.

Naturally there is a significant link between the grandparent-parent relationship and encouraging contact. While approximately a quarter of parents with difficult relationships actively promoted contact between grandparent and child, the majority of these parents actively sought to prevent it.

There were also a small number of significant results in terms of grandparent factors, for Mum's mum, for example, health proved important, with parents considerably more likely to encourage contact with healthy grandparents. For maternal grandparents (Mum's mum and Mum's dad) where they lived was significant - with those grandchildren in closest proximity (i.e. the same town) being more actively encouraged. Both age and marital status were significant for male grandparents (as they weren't for Mum's mum or Dad's mum) with children being more frequently encouraged to spend time with older (70 plus) grandfathers. Married grandfathers were more likely to have their grandchildren's contact encouraged by parents; it seems that for fathers divorce or separation has a lastingly detrimental impact on the parent-child relationship.

### How can grandchildren develop closer relationships with grandparents?

Overall most grandchildren, for their own sake, wanted to have close relationships with their grandparents. Most young people were aware that their parents held the key to their contact with grandparents.

Young people in the study had strong ideas on what needed to be done to foster good intergenerational relationships. First, they wanted opportunities for grandparents and grandchildren to do things together; second, time to build trusting relationships with them. However, they also realised this would not happen without parental help. They wanted encouragement and a positive attitude from their parents to foster grandparent contact.

Table 3.1

Young people's views on how to foster close relationships with grandparents (responses from all 1566 young people).

Fostering close relationships through:	Response
Activities	Arranging regular visits Organising shared activities Celebrating special events together Arranging holidays and outings with grandparents Spending (quality) time alone with grandparents Organising 'sleepovers'
Communication	Improving communication: talking and listening to each other Keeping in touch through phone calls, emails and letters Reducing geographical distance by moving closer to each other
Involvement	Building a trust relationship Sharing problems Involving grandparents in school-related activities Getting to know one another through storytelling / sharing memories Sharing interests Exchanging gifts Babysitting
Parental support	Encouraging children to visit, talk to and spend time with their grandparents Maintaining a positive attitude towards grandparents and contact (i.e. talk positively, show respect, maintain a close and positive relationship)

#### Chapter 3 references

- 3.1 Mueller and Elder, 2003
- 3.2 Block, 2000
- 3.3 Hill, Ross et al., 2005
- 3.4 Brown, 2003; Hodgson, 1992
- 3.5 Monserud, 2008, p. 183
- 3.6 Monserud, 2008;  
Thompson and Walker, 1987
- 3.7 Hill, 2000

# Filling the parenting gap: How are grandparents involved?



## Existing evidence

The Labour Force Survey 2007<sup>4.1</sup> in UK shows employment of mothers has increased considerably in recent years. For the three months to June 2007, 71.7% of married and cohabiting mothers were in employment and 57.1% of lone parents. Parents may be both money and 'time' poor<sup>4.2</sup>. There is some evidence that grandparents are filling the parenting gap by taking on daytime responsibilities for grandchildren<sup>4.3</sup>.

1 in 3 families depend on grandparents for childcare<sup>4.4</sup>. This rises to half (47%) of single parent families<sup>4.5</sup>. 16% of children in local authority foster care are living with family and friends carers<sup>4.6</sup>. The majority of these children are in the care of grandparents.

In the UK, since 1997, there has been a major programme of state sponsored family support. This has involved the development of Sure Start children's centres in local communities, special parenting and family funds to support local projects, extended schools and many other projects<sup>4.7</sup>. In all these initiatives, apart from when grandparents are full time child carers, the role that grandparents may have in supporting families is largely ignored.

Various researchers have tried to categorise the different roles of grandparents. Some talk about grandparents as the 'family watchdogs'<sup>4.8</sup> while others separate the functions of grandparents into five categories: spoiling the grandchild; the centrality of being a grandparent, valued elder, involvement with the past, and immortality through clan<sup>4.9</sup>. A study in Scotland notes that grandparents have particular roles as protectors ('like second parents'; 'they are there when you are in trouble'); as confidants ('you can tell them things you cannot tell your parents'); as supporters mediating between the generations; as benefactors helping with money, presents and school fees; as connectors bringing together the family history, family traits, shared characteristics<sup>4.10</sup>. Grandparents also have instrumental roles in their grandchildren's lives by being a mentor, role model and nurturer as well as playing the more symbolic role of historian, where they provide firsthand accounts of family histories, practices and rituals of the past<sup>4.11</sup>. Bengtson concludes that grandparents have five separate symbolic functions: being there; national-guard; family watchdog; arbiters who perform negotiations between members and participants in the social construction of family history<sup>4.12</sup>.

Most of these grandparent roles contain both instrumental and emotional aspects which 'may be visualised along a continuum ranging from symbolic at one end to the interactive and instrumental at the other'<sup>4.13</sup>. As mentioned earlier, traditionally there is a norm, widely accepted within the white Anglo-American societies, of non-interference by grandparents in the up-bringing of their grandchildren<sup>4.14</sup>. But in single parent families, this norm may be less true for grandparents where they can become replacement partners (i.e. confidante, guide and facilitator), and replacement parents (i.e. listener, teacher and disciplinarian)<sup>4.15</sup>.

## The current study

### Grandparents were highly involved in many aspects of their grandchildren's lives

The levels of grandparent involvement were determined by asking the adolescents to indicate the extent to which their grandparents had looked after them, participated in their social interests and school-related activities, had been mentor/advisor for future plans and problems, and had provided financial assistance<sup>4,16</sup>. The extent of grandparent involvement was assessed using the summation of all these 6 items, ranging from 6 to 18, with higher scores indicating higher level of grandparent involvement in adolescents' lives. Although there were clear differences in the type of involvement amongst the grandparents, the majority of grandparents were heavily involved in their grandchildren's lives. Some of the activities they were undertaking were those more traditionally associated with parenting: such as visiting the school and helping with homework. The maternal grandmother was usually the key person for providing the range of support given. Grandparents were an important source of social capital: not just in giving money but in talking about future life plans and perhaps, as was seen in the interviews, helping them to make contacts for future careers. When the young people had concerns, talking to grandparents was a comfortable place outside the immediate family to check things out. Most grandparents were less involved in disciplinary matters, but perhaps surprisingly, since we are thinking about adolescents, there were high levels of respect for grandparents' views.

Table 4.1

Percentage of all surviving Grandparents who were involved in grandchildren's lives (usually/occasionally)

Do your grandparents	Mum's mum	Mum's dad	Dad's mum	Dad's dad	All grandparents
Get involved in things you like?	72	69	62	59	66
Come to school and other events?	55	51	43	37	47
Talk to you about problems you have?	54	45	43	35	44
Share things you can't talk to parents about?	35	26	26	20	27
Talk to you about future plans?	80	76	76	71	76
Advice when you have a problem?	84	76	77	69	76
Give you money etc?	91	85	85	82	86
Tell you what you can and cannot do?	71	63	60	54	62
Do you respect what they say?	94	83	85	78	85

This study is the first in the UK to use a nationally representative sample of young people (aged 11-16) to report their involvement with their grandparents. Although individual young people may have very different relationships with grandparents, this study demonstrates grandparents in the UK are playing a major role in young people's lives. This involvement is not limited to the maternal grandparents but, as can be seen above, there were high levels of grandparental involvement in many aspects of the young person's lives over all surviving grandparents. Overall 80-90% of young people reported that they were regularly in touch with at least one of their grandparents. It may be that with the changing family scenario - more working parents, more divorces and increased longevity - grandparents are filling the gap between the 'time poor' parents and the parenting needs of the young people.

### What factors are related to more involved grandparenting?

Older adolescents had less grandparental involvement, but contrary to some of the literature<sup>4.17</sup> there was still considerable involvement with this age group. As might be expected there was less involvement from less healthy grandparents. More crucially, the study reinforced strongly that parents were the gatekeepers to grandparental involvement.

In the past it has been shown that the distance grandparents lived from their grandchildren was closely associated with emotional closeness and grandparental involvement. In this study it was found that contact was more important than where grandparents lived. Other researchers have found that even when separated by considerable geographic distances, grandchildren are still able to interact and maintain regular contact with their grandparents through phone calls, letter correspondence as well as holiday face-to-face contact<sup>4.18</sup>. With increasing use of modern communication such as mobile phones and e-mails by young people, grandparents are usually only a phone call away. More crucially, it is the regular contact between grandparents and grandchildren that promotes active involvement and also stronger intergenerational ties in adolescents' lives.

### Different types of involvement (findings from the 40 in-depth interviews)

The interviews with the young people supported the survey findings. Involvement varied considerably between and within families. For a small minority (three respondents) there was little or no involvement while at the other extreme (two respondents) there was full-time residential care of grandchildren. In keeping with other studies<sup>4.19</sup> findings suggest a number of key influences on involvement: the amount of contact between grandparent and child; level of care-giving; feelings of connectedness (emotional closeness); and, as already mentioned, the gender and lineage of the grandparent (young people often reported feeling closer to their grandmothers than their grandfathers, particularly maternal grandmothers) as well as the age of the grandchild.

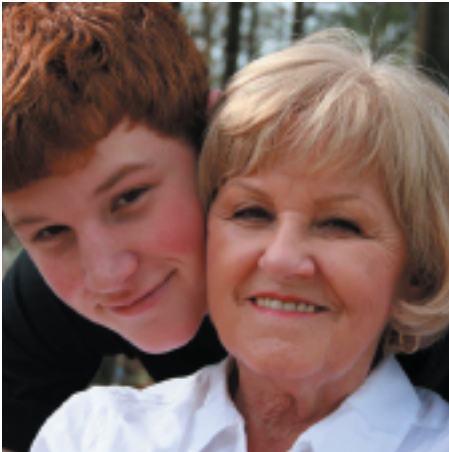
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- 4.2 Harvey and Mukhopadhyay, 2007
- 4.3 The Grandparents' Association, 2009
- 4.4 Office for National Statistics, Apr 2009
- 4.5 Dex and Ward, 2007
- 4.6 DCSF, 2008
- 4.7 Buchanan, 2007
- 4.8 Troll, 1983
- 4.9 Kivnick, 1982
- 4.10 Hill et al., 2005
- 4.11 Kornhaber, 1996
- 4.12 Bengtson, 1985
- 4.13 Kornhaber, 1996, p. 88
- 4.14 Hill et al., 2005
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- 4.16 Elder and Conger, 2000
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- 4.18 Kennedy, 1996
- 4.19 Bridges et al., 2007



# Involvement with grandchildren and grandparent well-being



## Existing evidence

One of the more important recent studies to view grandparenting from the perspective of the grandparents was that undertaken by Clarke and Roberts<sup>5.1</sup>. They found that most grandparents rated the relationship with their grandchild as 'one of the most important in my life'. Over half (55%) said that being a grandparent contributed 'enormously' to their quality of life and a third (31%) said it contributed 'a lot'. Only 4% said it contributed 'not at all'. Ninety one percent of those in touch with their grandchildren over the last two years felt 'very close' to them.

This study also considered the harsher reality of grandparenting: 74% 'often put themselves out' in order to help look after grandchildren. Cutting down or giving up work and undertaking more or different things than they anticipated at this stage of their life. For others who felt there had been some adverse effects of grandparenting this often came about because they were asked to do too much to help out, or because it was taken for granted that they would help. These grandparents felt they were due their time and had done their parenting 'I've brought mine up and it's up to them to bring up theirs'<sup>5.2</sup>.

But equally grandparents valued the additional dimension grandchildren brought to their lives. Grandchildren 'keep you young... when they come along you have to move up a few notches... go a lot faster'. Grandparents reported doing things they wouldn't otherwise have done and clearly enjoyed this as much as the reduced sense of responsibility associated with grandparenting compared with parenting 'when it's your grandchild it's different - there's not the worry behind it'.

The authors were surprised by how much grandfathers were involved in the lives of their grandchildren. Many grandfathers reported being actively engaged with grandchildren and, also, they spoke of their attachment and love for grandchildren<sup>5.3</sup>.

The main feeling was of strong emotional closeness and the contribution grandchildren made to the quality of their lives. The symbolic value of grandchildren was clearly important. They represented a sense of continuity and immortality.

## The current study: Findings from the in-depth interviews

### What do grandchildren do for grandparents? The young people's perspective

With the splendid self-centredness of youth, most young people found it hard to see that their grandparents had any life outside being available to them. They were 'always there for us'. The assumption was that grandparents should be around when needed. The quotations from the 40 interviews were telling.

Unlike other aspects of the interviews many young people found it very hard to see the world from the perspective of their grandparents. When asked 'what benefits did grandchildren bring to their grandparents', some young people said that they were not able to say for sure. They did not know, nor had no idea. One suggested that she could think of no benefits.

'I think if you come back in 40-45 years time I'll be able to tell you but actually I have no clue'.

When prompted, most young people then suggested that they thought they gave pleasure to their grandparents and probably made them happier. They remembered that grandparents said that they looked forward to seeing them as young people made things fun and grandparents seemed to enjoy their company. More benevolently they felt it was probably good for grandparents to see their grandchildren because it gave them someone to talk to because their own children were now grown up and leading independent lives.

'I suppose they enjoy their company and it's a good person to talk to and they could be proud of them couldn't they? ...'

Some young people, perhaps reflecting their own teenage concerns, felt that their grandparents may be bored and that grandchildren could help their grandparents keep boredom at bay. Seeing their grandchildren was something for grandparents to do and keep them occupied when they were retired. Older people needed company because life was really boring when they had nothing to do. They needed people to talk to even if they got their grandchildren's names all mixed up.

'Life is really boring when you have nothing to do [with grandchildren]. There are more people to talk to. They like to see us and then they mix up our names, like they call me by my sister's name.'

A few young people saw their role in keeping their grandparents up to date, fit and healthy. It was good for them having another child to look after now their own were grown up. Grandchildren gave them a chance to show their younger side again and gave them someone to love. Grandparents were particularly happy when a new grandchild arrived.

'I suppose it gives them a chance to show their younger side again and go out and do things. If my grandma didn't have grandchildren she would probably stay indoors quite a lot of the time. It gives them a chance to be young again... We keep them alive, keep them in there.'

Another group felt grandchildren played a role in keeping grandparents up to date and diverting them from the current worries. They felt that when they were with their grandparents they (i.e. the grandparents) did not have to worry about the economics. Young people kept them in touch and could teach them about the new technologies.

'My grandma didn't have a computer in her day and so she learns interesting things from us'.

A few young people showed deeper insight. One young man had worked in an old people's home on work experience, and was aware of the depressing atmosphere in the home with older people passing away. He felt his presence and youth had lifted all their spirits.

'When they start passing away I think it is nice for them to have other people to go to. If there are grandkids then there are always more people to give them company. I did a day at school where I had to go to an old people's home and now I know from them that they enjoy seeing the grandkids. And that's probably benefiting them.'

One of two children reported doing things for their grandparents, but surprisingly this was generally something you did not talk about with your friends. They did jobs around their grandparents' house or helped in the garden.

Just one young person gave a longitudinal view:

'It's nice, I suppose, seeing how your children have grown up and what they have grown into...watching the family grow.'

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#### Chapter 5 references

- 5.1 Clarke and Roberts, 2004
- 5.2 Clarke and Roberts, 2004
- 5.3 Clarke and Roberts, 2004

# The impact of grandparental involvement on adolescent well-being



## Existing evidence

Research on grandparental full-time care ('kinship care'), presents a mixed picture of the benefits for children, possibly because of the unusual circumstances in which this takes place<sup>6.1</sup>. Despite the lack of support for grandparents in this role researchers have found that the vast majority of kinship care placements were found to be positive for the child<sup>6.2</sup>. In the US, studies have shown significant emotional and general health problems amongst grandchildren being raised by their grandparents<sup>6.3</sup>. These findings largely relate to young children. But this is likely to be a function of deprivation as levels of poverty amongst these grandparents are high.

In the UK, very recent research<sup>6.4</sup> comparing outcomes for toddlers in both formal care (nurseries/playgroups) and grandparental care found that children under grandparental care had the worst behavioural scores. In a study of 385 children from the Avon Longitudinal Study of Parents and Children, children were asked how close they were to grandparents and given a four-point scale on which to base their assessment, whilst the child behaviour checklist (CBCL) measured child adjustment. At the first time point when children were on average nine years old there was an association between grandparental closeness and child adjustment, but five years later when the young people were on average 14 years old there was not. Unfortunately, there was no indication of what the grandparents actually did for, or with, their grandchildren and the age range was particularly wide<sup>6.5</sup>.

### Strong findings from the current study:

There were two important findings from the study relating to the well-being of young people. First, in the survey of 1566 young people, there was a measure of how close grandchildren were to their grandparents<sup>6,6</sup>. There was a very strong relationship between closeness to a specific grandparent (the closest) and 'pro-social' behaviour in young people as indicated on the subscale of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire<sup>6,7</sup>. The total score on this questionnaire has been widely used in the UK and internationally to measure overall levels of adjustment. Subscales measure different aspects of adjustment. Young people who scored highly on the pro-social subscale would have answered positively to the following questions.

I try to be nice to other people. I care about their feelings  
I usually share with others (food, games, pens etc.)  
I am helpful if someone is hurt, upset or feeling ill  
I am kind to younger children  
I often volunteer to help others (parents, teachers, children)

This suggests that there was a two-way intergenerational societal gain. Closeness to a grandparent fostered in the young people a greater understanding of others' feelings and needs as well as a greater willingness to help.

The second strong message from the current study is that grandparents' involvement, rather than emotional closeness, was strongly associated with greater well-being of the children. That is, grandparents who got 'stuck in' impacted on their grandchildren's overall well-being as measured by the total score of the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire. The findings, when a range of child, family and community factors were taken into account (see appendix C for full details) were highly significant. This is a particularly important finding from the study as it is the first research in a nationally representative sample of young people to demonstrate a clear link between grandparent involvement and child adjustment.

Table 6.1

The relationship between grandparent involvement and child adjustment (when a range of factors were taken into account)<sup>6,8</sup>

Grandparent involvement in:	Associated with
Hobbies and interests	Fewer behaviour and emotional difficulties in grandchildren, and fewer peer problems.
Schooling or education	Fewer overall adjustment problems and less anti-social behaviour.
Talking about future plans	Fewer overall adjustment problems and fewer emotional symptoms. In addition these young people had fewer problems with their peers.



### How grandparents impacted on children's well-being (findings from the in-depth interviews)

The findings from the in-depth interviews with young people fleshed out the survey data and explained what the grandparents were actually doing and possibly why this impacted on their well-being.

The young people generally described active grandparental involvement in their education, interests and career-planning. However, the findings demonstrate that this involvement varied a great deal. When thinking about education, for example, grandparents who saw their grandchildren more than once a week were often involved in helping with homework, whereas those who saw their grandchildren less often, asked unspecific questions about results and progress when they were together.

Grandparents who were involved in the child's daily routine were more likely to be involved in their interests and education. This level of day-to-day contact also promoted open discussion on a range of topics, including the child's plans for the future. For some grandparents providing a high-level of care for their grandchild (including residential care) educational involvement might also involve taking on what are traditionally seen as the parental responsibilities regarding their grandchild's education:

'Because my mum was sick on the day that I had my parents evening Gogo came with me and then she saw my teachers'

female, 14, black African, living with grandparent.

Grandparents, particularly those in frequent contact, were regular attendees at school events and sporting matches, providing emotional support and 'cheerleading' their grandchildren's extra-curricular activities; they were also participants in grandchildren's hobbies and pastimes.

'They always wanted to come and cheer for me... Whenever my grandmother's visiting she'll want to go to everything!'

male, 15, Asian, living with both biological parents.

'Me and my nan have like got the same hobbies, I like to make things, I like to make cards and stuff and cakes and my nan likes to do exactly the same'

female, 13, white British, single parent family.

Participating in shared activities with grandparents was more common amongst younger, female participants, who regularly spent time with their grandparents. Older adolescents (14+), particularly males, were less inclined to spend time with their grandparents in this way, their peer relationships having become increasingly important in their lives:

'We always used to do things like fishing... go for walks and the fair and things... I probably did see them more when I was younger because now I do other things, so my weekends are taken up by stuff that I go off and do'

male, 14, white British, living with both biological parents.

Time with grandparents also represented an opportunity for relaxation, fun and treats; a change from the regular routine. Whilst it was not the case for children who saw their grandparents daily or several times a week, approximately three quarters of all other interviewees associated time with their grandparents with a break from the 'strictness' of the parental regime, and an opportunity relax and enjoy their leisure time:

'With my granddad, I feel more relaxed and he spoils me more, what my dad doesn't do, he gives me. My dad doesn't let me have a coke at half-time whereas my granddad does. It's good fun'

male, 12, white British, living with both biological parents.

There was also awareness from some interviewees that when with their grandparents (unlike with their parents) that they were the sole focus of their attention:

'If your mum and dad look after you then they're never relaxed and they've got to do other things like work and clean, whereas like your grandparents they can spend the whole time with you'

female, 12, white British, living with both biological parents.

Grandparents were often involved in their grandchildren's education - as teachers/educators, as homework assistants, as career-advisors and as general supporters. This educational support was usually provided in addition to that of the parents; however, approximately a fifth of the sample (all in regular contact) felt that their grandparents played the key role in supporting their education.

'My mum helps with my homework as well, but because I go to my grandma's straight after school, which is where I usually do my homework, they kind of help us a bit more'

female, 13, white British, stepfamily, high level of contact.

Respected by their grandchildren, and seen as a source of knowledge and wisdom, grandparents were often called upon to help with some of the young persons' most important decisions.

For most interviewees discussions about the future involved information and advice from grandparents, who were thought to know more about the world and therefore about jobs, earnings and qualifications. Young people valued the opinions of their grandparents and appreciated the support they were offered:

'They're very supportive and helpful when it comes to what career to take and that kind of thing, because they know which ones are bad and which ones are good and which subjects to take'

male, 12, white British, living with both biological parents.

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#### Chapter 6 references

- 6.1 Hunt, 2008
- 6.2 Hunt, 2008
- 6.3 Caspar and Bryson, 1998
- 6.4 Hansen, 2006
- 6.5 Bridges et al., 2007
- 6.6 Elder and King, 2000.  
See appendix for details
- 6.7 [www.sdqinfo.com](http://www.sdqinfo.com)
- 6.8 Griggs et al., 2009.  
See appendix for further details

# When families hit hard times. Do grandparents make a difference?



## Existing evidence

Grandparents have always been in the front line in times of need. A study of the 17,000 sample of the National Child Development Study showed that most parents go to their family first for help when they have financial problems, relationship and emotional difficulties, when they are ill and when they need advice<sup>7.1</sup>. Others have found that having a confidant to whom you can talk about yourself and your problems has a strong buffering effect against depression<sup>7.2</sup>.

But family support is a two-way process. Although some consensus exists about 'the proper thing to do' when the wider family needs help, there is a limit to the amount of help they will give<sup>7.3</sup>. Conversely some family support may reinforce the very patterns that have led to continuing difficulties<sup>7.4</sup>. Parents are more reluctant to ask for help when grandparents had been divorced and/or there had been high levels of conflict in the original family<sup>7.5</sup>. A New British Social Attitudes Survey analysis has found that the number of single grandparents is rising (up from 8% in 1998 to 15% in 2007)<sup>7.6</sup>. At times of family breakdown children and adolescents report that in the weeks following separation grandparents are the ones they are most likely to turn to if they want intimately to confide in someone about family problems<sup>7.7</sup>. A U.S. retrospective study of young adults found higher levels of grandparent involvement among young adults in lone-parent families and stepfamilies than those who grew up in two-parent biological families<sup>7.8</sup>.

It is interesting that the norm of 'non-interference' may be less true for grandparents of lone parent families where grandparents can become 'replacement partners' (confidante, guide and facilitator), and 'replacement parents' (listener, teacher and disciplinarian)<sup>7.9</sup>. Clarke and Roberts found that nearly one in four grandparents (38%) had experienced family breakdown in at least one of their sets of grandchildren, and for 10% this meant family breakdown in all sets of grandchildren<sup>7.10</sup>.

Researchers consistently report that children and adolescents in non-intact families (such as divorced and stepfamilies) have on average higher probabilities of difficulties in their psychosocial, health and school adjustment than those growing up in intact families<sup>7.11</sup>. Conflict post divorce is particularly damaging for children<sup>7.12</sup>, but there is considerable research documenting a range of other risk factors for this poorer adjustment, such as socio-economic difficulties, poor parental mental health, frequent changes in family situations, lack of social support for the parent with care (usually the mother), and decreased parental attention which may or may not come as a result of family breakdown.

## The current study

### Grandparental help in times of adversity

In the survey an index of family adversity was given to all young people and they were asked to note if they had experienced a particular problem in the last year.

The index showed how common quite stressful events are in young people's and their parents' lives. In this representative sample of all young people in England and Wales, it was notable that during the last year 10% of the teenagers reported that someone in the family had drug or alcohol problems; 13% reported that someone in the family had been arrested; 14% that a family member had a mental health or emotional problem; 4% that parent(s) were in trouble with the law and 2% that one of the parents had been to jail. More than three quarters of the young people had experienced two or more adversities in the last year and over one third (37%) had experienced five or more.

Table 7.1

Adversities experienced by young people in the last year

Adversity	Percentage of young people experiencing this adversity in the last year
Saw a crime or accident	37%
Lost close friend (broke up/split up)	37%
Someone in the family died	36%
Family member was seriously injured	31%
Parent got a new job	28%
Attended a new school	24%
Parents argued more than previously	21%
One parent was away from home more often	21%
Close friend seriously sick or injured	20%
Negative change in family finances	18%
Got seriously sick or injured	18%
Family moved	16%
Family member had mental health/emotional problem	14%
Brother or sister left home	14%
Someone in the family was arrested	13%
Parents separated	11%
Family member had drug/alcohol problem	10%
Close friend died	10%
Was a victim of crime/violence/assault	9%
Got a new stepmother or stepfather	9%
Mother/Father lost their job	7%
Got a new brother or sister	7%
Parents got divorced	6%
Parent(s) got in trouble with the law	4%
Parent went to jail	2%
<b>Multiple adversities experienced</b>	<b>77%</b>

In the main total scores in the Family Adversity Index did not indicate whether a grandparent would be more or less involved. Given the high levels of involvement, this may not have shown up statistically. We know from an earlier study based on the 17,000 children who took part in the National Child Development Study that parents are more likely to ask for help from their families than from friends and professional bodies. As mentioned earlier, this applies to a range of different types of problems<sup>7,13</sup>.

Figure 7.1

Total number of adversities experienced in the last year

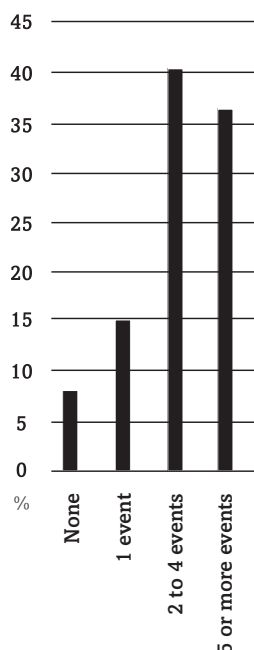
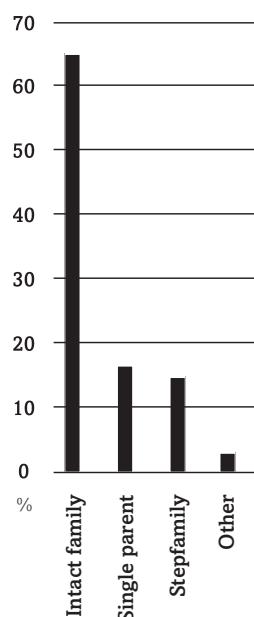


Figure 7.2

Children living in different family types



## Chapter 7 references

- 7.1 Buchanan and Ten Brinke, 1997
  - 7.2 Brown and Harris, 1978
  - 7.3 Finch and Mason, 1991
  - 7.4 Buchanan, 1996
  - 7.5 Buchanan and Ten Brinke, 1997
  - 7.6 Grandparents Plus, 2009b
  - 7.7 Dunn, Davies, O'Connor, and Sturgess, 2001
  - 7.8 Kennedy and Kennedy, 1993
  - 7.9 Harper and Levin, 2005
  - 7.10 Clarke and Roberts, 2004
  - 7.11 Rogers and Pryor, 2001
  - 7.12 Buchanan et al., 2001
  - 7.13 Buchanan and Ten Brinke, 1997
  - 7.14 Flouri et al., forthcoming.
- See appendix for further details

In the current study, an analysis was undertaken problem by problem to see in what circumstances grandparents were more likely to get involved. In particular, where someone in the family was seriously sick or injured, where a parent got a new job, and during a family move, the closest grandparent was significantly more likely to get involved. But when young people reported more frequent arguments in their family, and where a parent was in trouble with the law, the norm of 'non-interference' appeared to rule. Grandparents were more likely to stay away.

However in such situations, it was the young people rather than the grandparents who took the initiative. When they were under pressure from multiple family problems (5 or more), young people were significantly more likely to talk about their problems with, and seek help from, their closest grandparent; likewise they were more likely to share things with their closest grandparent that they would not share with parents.

## The impact of closeness to a significant grandparent at times of family adversity

The fact that young people appeared to seek out their grandparents for support at times of family difficulty, may help to explain another important finding. Whereas, higher levels of family adversity scores were strongly associated with higher levels of maladjustment amongst the young people, where a young person had a close relationship with a grandparent, this closeness appeared to protect the teenager. In effect the support given by this relationship appeared to promote resilience in the young person<sup>7.14</sup>.

## Grandparent involvement with children living in different family settings

Another interesting area was the role of grandparents in different family settings. As is typical in the UK, around two thirds (65%) of the young people were living with both parents; 17% were living in lone parent families and 16% in stepfamilies. A further 3% were living in other types of family arrangement (living with brother, sisters, foster carers). Of these one third of children (ie 1% of the total sample) were actually living full-time with grandparents.

We were interested to see whether there was more grandparent involvement in the different family types. In fact, grandparent involvement was high in all types and did not significantly vary between them.

However, when it came to the links between the levels of grandparent involvement and child adjustment, there was an important finding. Grandparent involvement, when a range of other factors were taken into account, was more strongly associated with reduced adjustment difficulties among adolescents from non-intact families than those from intact families. These findings suggest that grandchildren in non-intact families are the chief beneficiaries of grandparent contact and that this contact is an important protective resource in their lives (see appendix C for further details).



# Children's rights to stay in touch with grandparents



## Existing evidence

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) Article 5, states that: 'Parties shall respect the responsibilities, rights and duties of parents or, where applicable, the members of the extended family or community as provided by local custom, legal guardians or other persons legally responsible for the child, to provide in a manner consistent with the evolving capacities of the child, appropriate direction and guidance...' <sup>8.1</sup>

Grandparent Plus believes that their primary focus should be on the welfare and rights of the child. They state three principles that should be met: 'promote the welfare of the child; reduce and manage conflict wherever possible; support a child's family relationships' <sup>8.2</sup>.

It is estimated that 1 million children are unable to see their grandparents because families have either separated or lost touch. Before separation 6 out of 10 paternal grandparents report feeling very close to their grandchild but that drops to 3 out of 10 after separation <sup>8.3</sup>. There is considerable evidence that conflict in family relationships, particularly following parental divorce, is very bad for children <sup>8.4</sup>.

Under the Children Act 1989, section 10, grandparents are treated in the same way as most other non-parents. They are required to seek leave of the court before they can apply for orders <sup>8.5</sup>. In the US however, all 50 states have legislation providing for 'grand parenting visitation' subject to the welfare of the child <sup>8.6</sup>. A qualitative study in the UK explored the role of grandparents in divorced families. This involved 113 interviews recruited from two samples obtained from divorce court records - 33 mothers, 16 fathers, 30 children, 21 sets of maternal grandparents and 15 sets of paternal grandparents. The authors concluded that their study did not provide evidence that grandparents should have their special role recognised by the law <sup>8.7</sup>.

## The current study: Findings from the in-depth interviews

### Young people confirmed that they wanted a continuing relationship with their grandparents

This is the first study to report the views of young people on what they want from their relationships with their grandparents. In the individual interviews all young people were asked whether they felt that grandparents should have legal rights to see their grandchildren. It was explained that following parental separation/divorce some grandparents did not see their grandchildren. The overwhelming majority of young people felt strongly that they wanted their grandparents to stay in touch. When however, it came to involving grandparents in court decisions they were much more pragmatic. Here the responses were divided between those who felt grandparents should be involved 'because they are family and know you', and those who felt it would not help.

Out of the 40 interviews, 35 young people expressed strongly that they wanted continuing contact with grandparents. Only 5 were uncertain or qualified their responses. One felt it was 'up to the parents' and the other said that although she would like to keep in touch with her grandparents herself she did know one grandmother who had stolen all her grandchild's money. A third mentioned that it should be up to the child as the grandparents may be 'harassing' the child. Overall young people were not especially concerned about their grandparents' rights but were forcibly saying that this was their right to have continuing contact.

Caution is necessary when interpreting this section. Although the young people were broadly representative of young people in England and Wales, by gender, by ethnic background, by marital situation of their parents, it is possible that those who agreed to be interviewed had better relationships with grandparents than those not interviewed.

The first part gives the young people's responses to the Question: 'Do you think grandparents should have rights to see their grandchildren?' The second part gives responses to the question: 'Should they be involved in court processes that involve the children?'

### Question A

#### Do you think grandparents should have rights to see their grandchildren?

**'Yes, we want contact with grandparents. They play a big part in our lives.'**

A significant group of young people strongly valued the extra support they obtained from their grandparents and felt they would be missing out if they were not allowed to see them. When asked if it would be a problem if contact with grandparents was stopped, the following summarises the responses:

'Yes, it will be, because it's part of someone's life they're just taking away.'

'Yes [I think they should have rights of contact] because I think they play a big part to the grandchildren's lives and they help out with their children and stuff.'

'Yes, because I think it plays a big part in your life, because if you haven't got your mum to turn to it's someone else to turn to and it's not just your parents all the time, you've got different sort of people to turn to, like your grandparents.'

'I think they should because grandparents, I think they're like a really important in the child's life because without them you wouldn't exist, because your mum wouldn't exist so they can't make you, if you know what I mean.'

When asked more specifically whether they would be upset if contact with grandparents was stopped following their parents' separation or divorce, there was also a strong response because it was felt grandparents might help them talk things through.

'That would be a problem for me because... well yes I love them so I would be really upset if I couldn't see them.'

'Yes I like seeing them... I'd rather have it, because they can help you can't they?'

'Because well they're my only grandparents now, so they should be able to talk to me and things.'

**'Yes, we should keep in touch because grandparents are part of the family'**

A second theme was that grandparents should keep in touch because they were different from other sort of relationships because they were part of the family.

'Yes they should, because they're like grandparents so they're family so they should be able to have their own like, be able to be able to talk to them or keep in contact.'

There were also strong feelings that parents should not be able to stop them seeing their grandparents.

'No they shouldn't be able to do that, (stop contact) no.'

'Yes definitely they need to stay in touch, yes.'

They felt they should have the legal right to see them.

'Because well it's their grandchild as well and it's part of their family, just to keep in touch and help them out, that kind of thing.'

'They (young people) should have a chance get to know their grandparents before they pass away.'

**It's not the fault of children if parents row with grandparents**

A strong theme was that disputes between parents and grandparents were not the fault of grandchildren and should not result in the grandchildren losing contact with grandparents. They felt the children would suffer as a result. When asked what should be done about it some young people reported that the law should changed to ensure that grandparents could stay in touch with their grandchildren.

'(Children should not lose contact with grandparents). I think that's not fair, because it isn't the children's fault.'

'I think they should get in touch because it's not their fault; it's not the grandparents' fault, and not the children's fault.'

'Yes because that's like saying that you couldn't see your kids, that's unfair because they've had nothing to do with the divorce have they, so how is it their fault that they can't see their grandchildren?'

'They should change it (the law).'

**Contact even when parents do not agree**

A significant number of young people felt they would want to keep in contact with grandparents even if their parents did not agree. Four of the older young people mentioned that they would actively pursue contact, if necessary in secret.

'But even if your mum had a fight with your grandma and you just don't keep in contact, I think that the child should keep in contact with their grandma.'

'I don't think it's right (to stop contact), because if it was say mum had a fall out with dad, she might tell granddad that I'm not allowed to go to football with him anymore.'

### Grandparents as protectors

Another important point raised by the young people was that grandparents were the first line of defence if there were difficulties with parents. Many young people were aware that grandparents could act as their protectors, in extreme cases against the vagaries of their parents.

'This might sound stupid, but if mum and dad are screw-ups, at least the grandparents are good; they can point me in the right direction.'

'If there's something going on then I think they (grandparents) should step in or something and have a say, if something's going wrong.'

Young people were pragmatic about the difficulties of family life. As seen earlier family adversities are very common in modern families.

'Like if you and your mum or your dad have ups and downs you want someone to turn to, but like if you don't have your grandma you don't know who else you can turn to.'

'Because if you're close to them and your parents fall apart and you don't have any contact you're going to miss them and you're going to want to talk to them, and you're going to want to see them, or, and you won't be concentrating as much in school because you're going to be wanting to speak to them, find a way to speak to them.'

'Yes because it's important for children to stay in contact with their grandparents, because grandparents can do like a lot of things, because if your mum and dad ever fall out and they're having trouble you can stay with your Nan, and sometimes Nan and granddads understand better than parents, sometimes. Yes it should be because they're not always going to be there and when they're not there you're going to miss them.'

### In case of death

Two children mentioned that if their parents died they would like to go to their grandparents. They felt as family grandparents would be able to share their pain at the death of a parent.

'Well if my mum and dad do die, touchwood, then I would go to my Nan and granddad and I would preferably go to them than, because I'd rather be living with them than other family really.'

'I feel very strongly that they should (stay in touch) because they, like, they're sort of like a second mum if you're very close to them or a second dad, and they're sort of feeling your pain, whereas if you sort of go to a foster parent, they will like comfort you and everything but they're not like, you're not related to them or anything. I think it also depends on the child's personality if they can like talk to their grandparents, but heaven forbid if my parents died, I would want my grandma to be a very big part of my life.'

### More ambivalent views

A minority of young people (5 out of 40) had more ambivalent views about giving grandparents rights of contact, particularly if the grandparent might represent a danger.

'Well actually it's good and bad (contact with grandparents). They should actually keep it that way because if the grandparents are harassing the child or they're beating them or something then they would not want to see them... But then on the other hand if the parents don't want the grandparents to see what the parents are doing then they could say no... you can't really tell, you can't really judge, so it's kind of hard to say whether they should be given legal rights or not. But in any circumstances the grandparents still should be able to see the children.'

'I don't think there's anything that should prevent them from seeing them, unless there's a problem, if the children are in any danger or something like that, but I don't know.'

But given that a grandparent presented no danger, young people felt contact should be allowed.

'I think they should be allowed to unless they've hurt them or something. I think they should be allowed. I think it's good for the children to see their grandparents and learn to get on with another generation.'

'Personally, at this age I wouldn't be very happy if my parents didn't want me to see my grandparents, but I don't see in any way that they're going to stop me seeing them, but yes, I'm not sure about giving them legal rights to see the kids, because it's not their children.'

#### **In the final analysis it should be the young person's choice that ruled the day**

Perhaps the strongest view was that in the final analysis, the young person should make the decision whether or not he/she wished to see their grandparent(s). As we have noted before, some young people felt they would take the law into their own hands and see their grandparents secretly.

'I think it should be more the kids' decision depending on their age. But obviously if the grandparents want to see the kids then I don't think the parent should just be able to say no... I think it depends on the kid's age because if they're really young then it's not really fair on them being brought up with one grandparent or no grandparents whatsoever, so I don't think it's fair.'

'I think well it should depend whether the child likes them or not. If the child really hated them then I think not, because... it's a chance for them to get away from them, but I think usually children like their grandparents.'

'If my mum and dad broke up I would want to see my gran and granddad, but if I wasn't allowed to I would go and see them in secret and not tell anyone, because they're the ones that would help us more to get over something like that, than my mum or my dad. I wouldn't be able to live with not being able to go and see someone I really like.'

#### **Question B:**

#### **Should grandparents be involved in court proceedings relating to young people's lives?**

It was interesting when it came to this question many young people were more pragmatic. While some said, yes of course, others could see the difficulties. Some of these young people had seen their own parents go through difficult conflicted court cases.

#### **Yes, because they are family and they might help me**

Some young people appeared to think it was normal for grandparents to be involved in a major family drama. But their perspective was very much that they might help them.

'Well I think so, yes, because if there's like a major family problem, I mean they are a family member so I think they should be included.'

'Because it's their grandchildren of course and because it's family, they understand what's been going on and everything and they can like, sort of like, how do you explain, help it out, like they can help you with it, they know like what to do and everything really, help you with it.'

One teenager had a positive experience of grandparental involvement in his parent's divorce and had found it helpful.

'Yes, I think they should because my Nan helped out my mum in court and everything so she's made big decisions, and she's been really helpful through my life.'

### But it may not be their problem

Other young people were more thoughtful, especially those who had experienced their own parents separation and divorce. They were aware of the limits to their grandparents' powers.

'(Grandparents) should be able to see us, but to say that they (our parents) can't get divorced then that's not up to them really.'

'It depends whether it was about them or not, if it was them directly involved, but they would give advice and help out and make statements if that was the case.'

Generally there was a view that they could be included but not to any great extent. It depended on the issues.

'I think they should yes (be involved in the legal situation), because it is kind of their business as well although it's like the parents mostly, but it is partly to do with them so they should be included.'

Young people were very aware of the possibility of conflict and the problems of each grandparent supporting their side of the family. They felt the actual divorce was not their grandparents' business.

'If it's to do with the grandparents yes they can come, but if it's nothing to do with them the parents should resolve their own issues, because they can't just come in and just start involving themselves. I'm not saying it's a bad thing but I'm not saying it's a good thing. It's a bad thing because grandparents do like to help their children, but they might favour one side and a fight could start and stuff like that. So if you like let the children resolve things that would be better.'

'No because I think if my mum fought for custody then my grandma (mum's mum) isn't going to support my dad, neither is my granddad (mum's dad). And then if my dad has custody my nana and my granddad (paternal grandparents) would fight for my dad.'

The teenagers were also aware that divorce concerned more than their well-being. There was property and money involved. Generally they felt grandparents were best kept away from the court battle.

'I think they should be informed about it but not actually be there.'

### Conclusions

We had not expected to see such strong findings in this area. Although the question was framed in terms of grandparents' rights, the young people interpreted it as their right to remain in contact with grandparents. The strong message from young people appeared to be that they wanted continuing rights to see their grandparents. They felt they would be missing out on an important source of what we would call social capital. In the final analysis, grandparents were seen as protectors against their parents doing them harm. But they also recognised that grandparents could also pose a danger and felt that young people should have the choice whether they kept contact or not.

When it came to involving grandparents in court ordered decisions following divorce and separation, they were much more pragmatic. Whereas some young people said 'of course, because they are family' others, some of whom had experienced their own parental divorce were more cautious. They felt grandparents should be informed but not directly involved.

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#### Chapter 8 references

- 8.1 UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989
- 8.2 Grandparent Plus, 2009a
- 8.3 Cabinet Office/DCSF, 2008
- 8.4 Buchanan et al., 2001
- 8.5 Children Act, 1989
- 8.6 Hill, 2001
- 8.7 Douglas and Ferguson, 2003



# The policy debate - a response from Grandparents Plus



This research clearly demonstrates the significant contribution that grandparents are making to family life and the positive impact they have on the welfare of older children. We believe that this contribution should be recognised and supported. This report also demonstrates that this is particularly important for those families who are experiencing difficulties or where parents separate or divorce.

## Grandparents are:

**filling the parenting gap by playing an increasing role** in supporting family life in a variety of ways, particularly in times of crisis and playing a growing role in children's education. **We need service providers to adopt a whole family approach when designing and delivering services. We also need more family counselling and mediation services involving grandparents and also targeting them with their services. We also need to ensure that schools recognise growing grandparental involvement and encourage them to play a full part in school life.**

**major influencers** on parent and child behaviour. **Campaigns aimed at changing family behaviour should recognise this and have a strategy for engaging grandparents.**

**making young people more 'prosocial'** where they are closely involved. This is significant because employers in particular are concerned that young people lack the 'soft skills' needed in life. **We need more opportunities for intergenerational contact and a greater respect for the contribution of older generations.**

**called upon by their grandchildren for emotional and other support at times of family crisis.** Grandparents' involvement is linked to reduced adjustment difficulties for children in single parent families where levels of grandparental involvement are high. **We need to support that involvement, making it easier to combine work and care by extending flexible working and by introducing a two week period of 'granny leave' which can be taken in the first year after a baby's birth. We know that this is a particularly stressful time for parental relationships.**

### Yet we know that parents are:

- **often the gatekeepers** to the grandparent-grandchild relationship. An important factor affecting this is whether or not parents are separated or divorced. We know from previous research that paternal grandparents are particularly likely to lose contact or to see a deterioration in their contact and relationship with their grandchildren. One million children are unable to see their grandparents because families have either separated or lost touch. **We need to listen to the voices of young people in this research who said they wanted encouragement and a positive attitude from parents to foster grandparent contact. This means we need to do more to support those intergenerational family relationships and to reduce conflict.**
- **less likely to encourage children to stay in contact** with grandparents where parents or grandparents divorce. We believe that more should be done to support and recognise the grandparental relationship. **We would like to see a review of the requirement that grandparents have to apply for leave for a residence or contact order.**
- **struggling and in need of relationship support.** Yet it can still be too difficult to get the help they need at the time they need it. This both places additional pressure on grandparents to step in and also jeopardises their relationships with their grandchildren if they then lose touch. **We want to see every family who experiences relationship breakdown entitled to three free sessions of relationship support, counselling or mediation.**

But with older children sometimes they may want to have the final word. They often want contact with grandparents because they play a big part in their lives.

### Young people are:

- **willing to visit grandparents without their parents' permission**, but most realise that fostering a relationship with grandparents involves active help from parents.
- **prepared to assert their right to have contact with grandparents.** They don't think in terms of grandparents' rights but regard it as their right to maintain contact in the event of conflict, separation or divorce. They want to be the ones to have the final say.
- **pragmatic about involving grandparents in court cases.** They think that grandparents should be informed but not directly involved in court cases. There is more that could be done. When couples with children are divorcing they complete a Statement of Arrangements form, setting out where and with whom the children will be living and what the contact arrangements will be with the non-resident parent. It includes details of the child's childcare arrangements, their school and any special educational needs they may have. But there is no reference to relationships with other people including grandparents and the wider family who may be important to the child. Grandparents Plus believes that this is a missed opportunity. We need to ensure the child's voice is heard in divorce proceedings. **We want to see the Statement of Arrangements form for children include what steps parents will take to support a child's relationships with their grandparents and other important people in a child's life.**

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# The study

## Participants and procedure

Permission to carry out the study was obtained from the University of Oxford Ethics Committee.

Children, aged 11-16, were recruited from 1010 schools drawn from the School Government Publishing Company's list using probability proportionate to size sampling. Advance letters detailing the purpose of the study were sent to the sampled schools. Included in the letter was a return slip for the school to complete to indicate their willingness to take part in the study, and, if willing, to provide a contact name of the person at the school who would be in charge of arranging the survey process. Surveys were conducted with children in one year per school, chosen using random allocation. A class within each year was also randomly chosen. Children filled out anonymous questionnaires in class, and returned their questionnaires in a sealed envelope. In all, 103 schools indicated their willingness to take part in the study, and 70 returned questionnaires. The original sample was 1566 secondary school aged children.

## Measures

Contextual and structural factors were gender, age, free school meals (FSM) eligibility, and Special Educational Needs (SEN) status.

Adverse life events were assessed with Tiet et al.'s Adverse Life Events scale which in this study measured number of adverse life events experienced in the last year. This scale is composed of 25 possible events for which children had little or no control over (e.g., 'someone in the family died', 'negative change in parents' financial situation'), and is a modification of the Life Events Checklist which has acceptable validity and test-retest reliability. The LEC is a measure of exposure to potentially traumatic events developed at the National Center for Posttraumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) to facilitate the diagnosis of PTSD.

Psychopathology and prosocial behavior were assessed with the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ), a 25-item 3-point scale (ranging from 0-2) scale measuring four difficulties (hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and peer problems), as well as prosocial behavior. Each subscale had five items. A total difficulties (broad psychopathology) scale is calculated by summing the scores for hyperactivity, emotional symptoms, conduct problems, and peer problems ([www.sdqinfo.com](http://www.sdqinfo.com)).

Academic achievement was measured with the children's results in Standard Attainment Tests (SATs) taken at the end of primary school (Key Stage 2). SATs are statutory tests in the Core subjects of the National Curriculum. At the end of Key Stage 2 (when children are aged 10-11), children have to take national tests in English, mathematics and science. There are certain levels which children should attain. According to the Department for Children, Schools and Families, the expected level for children at the end of Key Stage 2 is 4. As the study sample was in secondary school, Key Stage 2 SATs results could be obtained from all students.

Closeness to grandparents was measured with Elder and King's scale of grandparent-grandchildren relationship quality. Children indicated on 4-point scales (ranging from 1-4) the extent to which they could depend on their grandparent, the extent to which they felt appreciated, loved or cared for by their grandparent, the extent to which the grandparent helped them in significant ways, the extent to which they perceived happiness in their relationship with their grandparent, and the extent to which they were close compared to other grandchildren to the grandparent. The grandparent who received the highest scale score was identified as the closest grandparent. Additional criteria, as suggested and used by Elder and King were used to identify the closest grandparent if more than one close grandparent was identified. These criteria were frequency of contact (the grandparent that they saw or talked to most was rated as the most significant), gender of grandparent (the same-sex grandparent was rated as the most significant), and lineage (maternal grandmother was chosen first, followed by maternal grandfather and then paternal grandparents).



Area risk was measured with the Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD), a weighted area-level aggregation of specific dimensions of deprivation. The dimensions of deprivation used to construct the English IMD 2004, for instance, were 1) income deprivation, 2) employment deprivation, 3) health deprivation and disability, 4) education, skills and training deprivation, 5) barriers to housing and services, 6) living environment deprivation, and 7) crime. The schools' postcodes were used to identify the level of local area risk. As the English IMD and the Welsh IMD are not comparable IMD ranks were used, which for the purposes of this study were standardized.

### **In-depth Interviews.**

These were conducted by two young researchers from the University of Oxford. The sample was derived from the young people who responded to the survey. The parents of those young people in the survey who agreed to talk further (the final section of the questionnaire asked the teens if they would happy to talk to a researchers) were randomly approached by the survey company and asked if they would be willing to meet up with the researchers from the University of Oxford. The first 40 young people who agreed to be interviewed met up with the researchers. The young people came from all over England and Wales.

Interviews were transcribed and entered into Nvivo for analysis using a cross-case thematic 'framework' approach. This approach is of particular use in studies where objectives are pre-set and there is a need to link the analysis to quantitative findings. A thematic framework was constructed and systematically applied to interview transcripts; the results were then charted according to key themes for researcher interpretation.

### **Representativeness**

#### **a) Survey: 1566 young people**

The survey was designed to be representative of young people in England and Wales age 11-16. The resulting sample was checked against national statistics (Office for National Statistics, 2007). The sample was indeed broadly representative of children in England and Wales. There were approximately equal percentages of males (50.8%) and females (49.2%) aged 11 to 16 years old ( $M = 13.38$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ). The majority (64.8%) of children were from intact families, 17.1% were from lone-parent families (national rate = 24%) (Office of National Statistics, 2007). Furthermore, 15.9% were from stepfamilies and approximately 3.2% of the children were living in households with other types of living arrangement (such as with a grandparent, an older sibling, or another relative). About 9% of the sample reported having been excluded from school at some time and 18.9% as having received free school meals at some point in their lives (in the UK all children whose families receive state benefits are eligible for free school meals). In the sample, 90.3% recorded their ethnicity as White and this is broadly comparable to the national rate, 92.1% (Office of National Statistics, 2007).

#### **b) In-depth Interviews: 40 young people**

The interviewees were broadly representative of the total survey sample (and, in turn, young people in England and Wales) in terms of gender (just over half being male) and age (mean = 13.4, range = 11-16). Young people taking part in the interviews were primarily white British ( $n = 29$ ), the remainder: black African ( $n = 3$ ), Asian ( $n = 4$ ) and white European ( $n = 4$ ). Most of the young people lived in urban/suburban ( $n = 28$ ) areas with the reminder ( $n = 12$ ) residing in rural areas, villages and small towns. The majority of interviewees lived with both biological parents ( $n = 27$ , 64.8% in the survey) with roughly equal proportions of the remaining interviewees living with just their mother ( $n = 5$ , 17.4% in the survey) or their mother and her partner ( $n = 6$ , 15.3% in the survey) - two were living with their grandmother, but had regular contact with their mother.

## Further statistics

### Papers relating to the study and relevant statistical models

Further details of the study reported here are available in the individual papers listed below.

Tan, J-P, Buchanan, A., Flouri, E., Attar-Schwartz, S. and Griggs, J. (in press) Filling the parenting gap? Grandparental involvement with UK adolescents, *Journal of Family Issues*.

Griggs, J., Buchanan, A., Tan, J-P, Attar-Schwartz, S. and Flouri, E. (2009). 'They've always been there for me': Grandparental involvement and child well-being, *Children and Society*, published Online: 11 Feb 2009, at <http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/cgi-bin/fulltext/122196997/HTMLSTART>, DOI 10.1111/j.1099-0860.2009.00215.x'

Attar-Schwartz, S., Tan, J-P, Buchanan, A., Griggs, J., Flouri, E. (2009). Grandparenting and Adolescent Adjustment in Two-Parent Biological, Lone-Parent, and Step-Families, *Journal of Family Psychology*, 23, 1, 67 - 75.

Buchanan, A., Flouri, E., Tan J-P, Griggs, J. and Attar-Schwartz, S. (2008). Grandparenting: the growing influence of grandparents. *ChildRIGHT*, 248, 14-18.

### C.1: Factors predicting grandparental involvement

In the study statistical models were used to predict various outcomes. In the Tan et al. paper (in press) noted above the following table was given. As can be seen when a range of factors were taken into account, higher involvement of the 'closest' grandparent was predicted by, the grandchild being younger, female, higher contact, good grandparent health, and the relationship with parents (see model 5).

Table C.1

Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for predicting grandparental involvement (N=997)<sup>A.1</sup>

		Standardised coefficient, $\beta$					
Predictors		Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Child factors	Age	-.15***	-.14***	-.06*	-.06*	-.04*	-.05
	Gender (male)	-.10**	-.10**	-.07**	-.06**	-.06**	.20
	Free school meals	.03	.03	.01	-.01	.00	-.00
	Ethnicity (white/non)	.07	.07	.01	.01	-.00	-.00
Family factors	Proximal adversities		-.06	.00	.00	.01	.01
	Distal adversities		.04	.01	.02	.02	.02
Grandparent factors	Frequency of contact			.36***	.19***	.20***	.21***
	Proximity			-.04	-.03	-.02	-.03
	Employment status			.02	-.01	-.01	-.01
	Health			.15***	.10***	.10***	.11***
	No. of grandchildren			-.05*	-.04*	-.04	-.04
	Parent-grandparent						
Relationship			.15***	-.01	-.01	-.13	
	Parental encouragement			.27***	.14***	.14***	-.25*
Emotional closeness	Closeness (EC)				.53***	.53***	.29***
Community factors	Country (Wales)					-.00	-.01
	Standardised rank score IMD					.07**	.08**
Interaction terms	Grandchild's gender x EC						-.26*
	Parent-grandparent relationship x EC						.24
	Parental encouragement x EC						.45**
Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>		.03	.03	.32	.50	.51	.52
F-value		7.55***	5.45***	36.97***	74.52***	66.49***	58.34***
F change in R <sup>2</sup>		7.55***	1.25	61.97***	378.19***	5.49**	7.66***

\*\*\*P < 0.001;

\*\*P < 0.01;

\*P < 0.05.

#### Note

A.1 As is usual, numbers in regression models vary. The regression models only include children who responded to every question in the model

## C. 2. Grandparental involvement and child well-being: multivariate analyses

In the Griggs et al. paper (2009) regression models were run to test the relationship between the involvement of the closest grandparent and child well-being (SDQ scores) whilst controlling for a range of factors. Analysis revealed that dimensions of grandparental involvement were predictive of young people's psychological well-being. Involvement in hobbies and interests was significantly associated with a lower incidence of total difficulties (-0.9\*) and peer problems (-0.10\*\*); involvement in schooling or education with a lower incidence of total difficulties (-0.7\*) and conduct problems (-0.9\*); and talking to grandparents about future plans with a lower incidence of total difficulties (-0.9\*\*), emotional symptoms (-0.8\*) and peer problems (-0.10\*\*).

Table C.2

Grandparental involvement and child adjustment/well-being regression analysis (n=1080)

Predictors	Total difficulties	Emotional symptoms	Hyper-activity	Peer problems	Conduct problems	Pro-social behaviour
<b>Background variables</b>						
Child's age	-0.03	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	-0.04	-0.07*
Child's gender (male)	-0.06*	-0.28***	-0.00	0.09**	0.11***	-0.32***
Not SEN	-0.11***	-0.06	-0.05	-0.13***	-0.08**	0.00
No free school meals	-0.06*	-0.04	-0.02	-0.06	-0.06	-0.02
Ethnicity (non-white)	-0.08**	-0.08**	-0.07*	-0.06*	-0.01	-0.03
<b>Adversity</b>						
Proximal adverse life events	0.29***	0.13***	0.21***	0.13***	0.27***	-0.04
Distal adverse life events	0.06	0.09**	0.02	0.03	-0.02	0.07*
Country (Wales)	0.05	0.03	-0.00	0.10**	0.02	-0.03
Standardised rank score of IMDa	-0.01	0.00	-0.00	-0.04	-0.00	-0.01
<b>Grandparental involvement</b>						
Frequency of care taking	0.04	0.04	-0.03	0.02**	0.05	-0.01
Hobbies/interests	-0.09*	-0.07	-0.03	-0.10**	-0.02	0.04
School involvement	-0.07*	-0.04	-0.04	-0.01	-0.09*	0.06
Problem-sharing	0.03	0.05	-0.04	0.07*	0.01	0.03
Career planning	-0.09**	-0.08*	-0.02	-0.10**	-0.04	0.05
Advice	-0.01	-0.02	-0.02	0.01	0.00	0.07
Financial support	0.04	-0.02	0.08*	-0.05	0.08**	-0.08*
Authority	0.06	0.01	0.06	0.06	0.04	-0.02
Respect	-0.07*	0.04	-0.11***	0.02	-0.11***	0.16***
Adjusted R2	0.18	0.13	0.08	0.09	0.14	0.17
F	13.94***	10.06***	5.84**	7.14***	10.74***	12.85***
n	1078	1080	1079	1079	1080	1080

### C.3. Grandparent involvement in different family types

In the Attar-Schwartz paper regression models were also run to predict adolescent adjustment in different family types and the impact of grandparent involvement (see Attar-Schwartz et al., 2009). As can be seen in Model 4, when other factors are taken into account grandparent involvement is particularly significant in predicting better adjustment in lone-parent/stepfamilies.

Table C.3

Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Adolescents' Adjustment from background Variables; Family Type, and Grandparent Involvement (Standardized Beta Coefficients)

	Emotional symptoms	Conduct problems	Hyper-activity	Peer problems	Prosocial behavior	Total difficulties score
<b>Standardised Coefficients</b>						
<b>Model 1</b>						
Age	-.04	-.06*	-.02	-.03	-.04	-.06*
Sex (boys)	-.28***	.08**	.004	.08**	-.29***	-.06*
Exclusion from school (excluded)	.03	.18***	.14***	.01	-.08**	.14***
Free school meals (receivers)	.10**	.04	.01	.09**	.03	.09**
Ethnicity (white)	.04	.003	.07*	.06*	.02	.06*
_R2	.083***	.064***	.027***	.02***	.115***	.04***
<b>Model 2</b>						
Lone-parent family (ref = intact family)	-.02	.64***	.26*	.20	-.19	.40**
Stepfamily (ref = intact family)	-.05	.43**	.07	.31*	-.11	.28*
_R2	.004	.006*	.005*	.001	.002	.008**
<b>Model 3</b>						
Grandparent involvement	-.010**	.03	-.04	-.05	.16***	-.06
_R2	.007**	.005*	.004*	.009*	.032***	.013**
<b>Model 4</b>						
Lone-parent family x involvement	.01	-.63***	-.24	-.18	.16	-.36**
Stepfamily x involvement	.12	-.35**	.01	-.28*	.08	-.19
_R2	.001	.020***	.003	.004	.001	.006*
Adjusted R Square	.087	.088	.031	.026	.14	.061

Emotional symptoms:  $F(10, 1311) = 13.479$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Conduct problems:  $F(10,1311) = 48.886$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Hyperactivity:  $F(10,1311) = 5.231$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Peer problems:  $F(10, 1311) = 4.515$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Prosocial behavior:  $F(10,1311) = 22.989$ ,  $p < .001$ ; Total difficulties score:  $F(10,1311) = 9.480$ ,  $p < .001$ , \* $p < .05$ .

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## Appendix C

- Table C.1: Summary of hierarchical regression analysis for predicting grandparental involvement
- Table C.2: Grandparental involvement and child adjustment/well-being regression analysis
- Table C.3: Summary of Hierarchical Regression Analyses Predicting Adolescents' Adjustment from background Variables; Family Type, and Grandparent Involvement



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