Thank you for your “call for views” request which was made available to me by a lone parents organisation. Your first suggested category is: The Provision of Services & Support Groups

Religious organisations are a tremendous source of practical support. I am a member of a particular religious organisation. The support is available for all parents & children, & for example, on becoming a lone parent, I was gifted a paid holiday by that religious organisation, which was helpful as I was somewhat depressed at the time. As above a particular lone parent organisation also provided support, mostly in the form of advice & referred a university student to me who was conducting similar research to your own “call for views” & I was glad to help. All the above have been very inclusive.

In contrast I find the state both at Scottish & British level to be far less inclusive, often unhelpful & counter productive. A lone parent who is not main carer (usually the father) has difficulty accessing childcare services & I have directly experienced this.
2. In attempting to access state childcare services at a location, for example, on one occasion I was informed "I don't have to see you." Somewhat ironic given that the appointment was itself portrayed as "consultation."

Your second suggested category is: Societal attitudes towards lone/unmarried fathers.

This is another manifest failure of the state at Scottish & British levels. In general people I am in regular contact with, on a daily/regular basis are unsure how to act/proceed in relation to single fathers. State redefinition of marriage is adding to the confusion. I find that lone/unmarried mothers tend to experience unacceptable attitudes more than lone/unmarried fathers do and I believe that this is due largely to the negative manner in which lone/unmarried mothers are often presented by the media, for example 'tailored press'. I am however often aware of individual acts of kindness towards me for which I am grateful. Society is however very aware indeed that for many years fully paid up single fathers were consistently wrongfully targeted on child maintenance by the state. This resulted in tremendous sympathy at grassroots level as the actions of the state contributed to many tragedies. A full governmental apology at Scottish & British levels is what is required. I believe it is within the remit of the Equal Opportunities Committee to help bring this about.
3. Your third suggested category is **Issues around parental responsibilities & rights for fathers**.

On attempting to access child healthcare at state level again I have encountered negative attitudes due to not being main carer (which is usually male). Again at one location told "I don't have to see you." Is this some sort of (unwelcome for me) State mantra?? & yes, Equal Opportunities Committee that is an actual question - feel free to answer!! This is the issue of *privacy* importance to me. That both parents have equal rights at the medical level. Currently it is generally the mother only who has medical rights parenally.

I experienced difficulty achieving a reasonable work/home balance. However despite being regularly prevented from attending work I paid all child maintenance due, indeed I voluntarily overpaid. I note carefully the state sponsored Children & Young People (Scotland) Bill proceeding through The Scottish Parliament. Currently, which represents another reduction of parental (especially single father) rights.

I believe my submissions to have remained within the remit of The Data Protection Act, not having named individuals, departments, places etc. Either way I happily give my permission to give this submission anonymously, if so simply remove my signature & address.

Thank you & wishing you well in your work.

4 February 2014