

Paper presented at the WELLCHI Network Conference 2

**Well-being of children and labour markets in Europe
Different kinds of risks resulting from various structures and changes in the labour
markets**

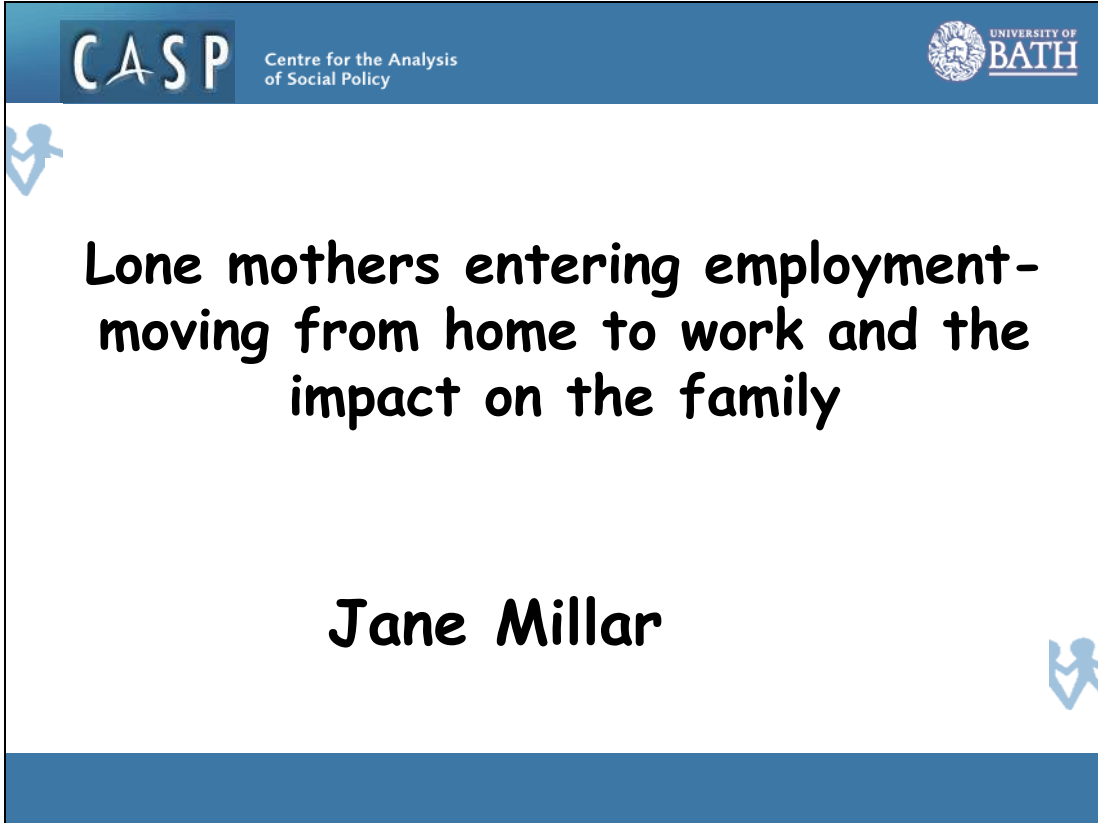
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**Lone mothers entering employment –
Moving from home to work and the impact on the family**

Jane Millar, *University of Bath*

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Slide 1




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**Lone mothers entering employment-
moving from home to work and the
impact on the family**


Jane Millar

CASP Centre for the Analysis of Social Policy 

Lone mothers & employment


- Paid work is increasingly the norm for all mothers
 - including lone mothers
- Most countries now expect/require lone mothers to work
 - especially when children reach school age
- Expectations about work changing
 - although 'choice' about when/how much to work remains important





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What do we know about the impact on children?

- The focus is often on 'future' variables
 - Such as education, employment, marriage
- Simple comparisons: paid work or not
 - Hours of work/schedules/nature of job/time use
 - Nature and quality of child-care
 - Level and type of support for non-working parents
- Mediating factors
 - Income, age, sex, family size




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Our ongoing research

Two rounds of in-depth interviews with:

- 50 lone mothers into employment from income support, working:
 - From 16 hours per week up to 45 plus hours
 - School hours working common, but also
 - Night work/shift work/weekend work
- 61 children aged 8-14, experiencing:
 - Family care (grandparents, fathers, siblings, etc)
 - Self care
 - Formal care





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What the mothers say


- The 'right' time to work
 - Get off Income Support
 - Happier working
 - Make the family better off
- What they think children gain
 - Financially
 - School participation
 - Independence
 - Security
- What they think children lose
 - Being there





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 **What the children say**

- It's good because It's bad because
- Positive aspects of mothers being in work
 - More money
 - Wellbeing for self and mother
 - Security
 - Status
- Negative aspects of mothers being in work
 - Income and insecurity
 - Hidden costs
 - Concerns about mothers' wellbeing



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 **The 'family-work project'**

- All involved in sustaining work
 - Sometimes very explicit: 'we all muck into together'
- Often involves other family members
 - Fathers & Grandparents
- Staying in work
 - Important to cope & stay in work, even if problems

