



www.equal-parenting-scotland.com

Scottish Equal Parenting Alliance

Scottish Division of Equal Parenting Alliance Party

The Equal Parenting Alliance is a new UK political party, formed in 2006. We aim to put the issues of family law back on the political agenda, and influence the other parties and government into adopting family law policies that will truly benefit children.

We are putting up a Scottish MSP Parliamentary candidate in the Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency, currently held by Labour's Cathy Jamieson..

We are also standing in the English local government elections.

(We would like to stand more candidates, but funds are limited).

This document, mostly taken straight from our web-site, provides basic information about our party and our campaign.



Our MSP Candidate
Ray Barry

0790 550 2856

ray@EqualParentingAlliance.com



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Who Are The Equal Parenting Alliance?

The Equal Parenting Alliance is a new UK political party, formed in 2006. We aim to promote a system of family justice in the UK that puts the needs and interests of children first.

In the elections on the 3rd May we are standing a Scottish MSP Parliamentary candidate in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley and also an English local government candidate in Surrey.

The Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency, in Ayrshire, is currently held by the New Labour incumbent Cathy Jamieson. Our candidate will be [Ray Barry](#).

Our Campaign

We decided to base our campaign on the themes of *parental alienation* and *youth crime* and the eye-catching design of our campaign leaflet has already attracted positive attention.

[Parental Alienation](#) is a particularly nasty form of behaviour by selfish parents that is unfortunately ignored (or even encouraged) by the Scottish family law system.

Thousands of Scottish children are denied a parent, a pair of grandparents or the rest of their extended family for no good reason – and we hope to draw attention to their plight by our campaign.

You can read a real life story of a father and daughter who were victims of parental alienation in [Mike's Story](#).

It certainly wasn't easy choosing parental alienation as our main focus, we could have concentrated solely on the problems of fatherless families and the rise of [youth crime](#), grandparents who are denied any contact with their grandchildren, the failure of this government to do anything about our dysfunctional family law system or simply the many failings of the judicial system itself.

Although Scotland has a separate legal system to England and Wales, unfortunately the problems in family law are virtually identical as the different laws are implemented just as badly. You can read more about these issues on our [main Equal Parenting Alliance web site](#).



Our MSP Candidate
[Ray Barry](#)



[View entire leaflet](#)



[Press Coverage of the Campaign](#)



[New Cumnock – Same Old Story](#)

Ray Barry surveys the remains of a vandalised bus-shelter on the outskirts of New Cumnock



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Ray Barry - Candidate for Carrick Cumnock and Doon Valley constituency in Ayrshire

Ray Barry is 57, currently lives in Wolverhampton, and is a retired Civil Servant, having worked for Job-centreplus for 30+ years. He specialised in helping disabled people to find work, has an MSc. degree in this field, and now runs an independent consultancy from his home, helping people to return to work after injury. Ray also does voluntary work driving disabled students to college, he has a theology degree, and has trained as a priest.

Ray has 3 children, the eldest 2 of whom he has not seen for 7 years. "I was a completely hands-on devoted father," he says. "putting them to bed, getting them up, cooking, and taking them on outings at the weekends. Words cannot describe my heart-break at being separated from them. My eldest two have refused to see me since their mother left with them, even though neither has ever accused me of any mistreatment (which might explain their refusal).



Ray Barry

“I want to change all of this so my children do not have to go through the same when they grow up”



I am like so many other fathers today who find that the hearts and minds of our children are turned against us after separation. I want to change all of this so that my children do not have to go through the same when they grow up.

If you would like to help, you can make a donation to our election fund [here](#) or just give me a ring if you'd like to talk to me directly.

You are very welcome to contact me about any issue

0790 550 2856

or [by email](#)



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Personal Manifesto by Ray Barry

Every year, thousands of children in Scotland lose a parent.

This is not because of unavoidable family tragedy, but simply because of the actions of one person. If one parent chooses to completely eliminate the other, our family justice system will do nothing to protect the children's right to two parents and a balanced family life.

These children's lives are permanently damaged - and many will lose half their grandparents and extended family too - for no good reason.

Traditional politics is increasingly irrelevant to our society, I think politics should be about ordinary, decent people doing what is right. I am proud to be standing for a new party, the Equal Parenting Alliance.

Quite simply, we believe the family justice system should put the needs and rights of children before the rights and wishes of either parent.

I want the people of Scotland to have the chance to show they put the welfare of children before everything else. Of course, we would prefer to stand in every seat in Scotland, but being new we can't afford that!

I therefore decided to stand here because Cathy Jamieson, as the Scottish Justice Minister, should have done something to help these children. But instead, she chose not to.

If you want to send a signal that the family justice system should protect and respect the rights of children, please give me your vote. This is not a vote for me, but a vote for your children and the generations to come.



[Ray Barry](#)

“I want the people of Scotland to have the chance to show they put the welfare of children before everything else.

A vote for me, is a vote for the future of your children and your



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Focus on : Parental Alienation

Parental Alienation is a term used to describe a child who has been turned against a parent, usually by their other parent.



One fundamental of good parenting is supporting the role of the other parent.

Children need two parents, and they especially need two parents that work together. They need a consistent view of the world and their place in it to feel secure and confident.

It's as simple as mum not telling Johny he can play outside – straight after dad's told him he can't – even if she thinks it's OK herself.

Or it's as complex as dad telling him that mummy's just out late and will be back soon – even if he really thinks she's having an affair with his best friend.

Clearly we must be realistic, people are always going to argue or briefly undermine the other parent – we're only human. All the same, for good parents this is the exception about which they feel guilty, rather than the rule.

It's a simple matter of putting the welfare of the child before your own feelings. Even when it's easier to just blame the other parent, we don't.

Indeed, parents the world over support each other naturally, they understand it helps their children to feel loved and valued equally by them both.

Unfortunately, relationships break down increasingly often in our society, and when this involves children it can be especially difficult.

Of course, in most cases, parents recognise that the children shouldn't have to suffer just because they can't get on. They make sensible arrangements to ensure their breakup has as little impact on their children as possible.

In a minority of cases one or both of the parents can't or won't agree how parenting of the children is to be arranged after breakup. These are the cases that end up in the courts.

If one parent is determined enough, they can keep the children all for themselves. It is usually the mother – as the system accepts and even helps a mother in the removal of a child's father – and it can be done easily and without challenge. It is much less common for it to be the father, though it does happen.

We believe that removing a parent completely from a child's life, without very good reason, is the ultimate in selfishness and bad parenting.

Of course, very rarely, there *are* good reasons for excluding one parent. However, our courts do not look for *good* reasons, they are happy with *any* reason, whether true or fabricated and – amazingly enough – they don't much care which!

These children are damaged for life. You'd expect the family justice system to put the children first and help them keep both parents. But instead, they take the easy way out, shrug their shoulders, and say "What can we do?".

Normal people naturally expect courts in this country to be places where truth and justice are at work. Nothing could be further from the truth.

No-one is pretending that these situations are *easy*, of course, but by standing back and rubber-stamping parental alienation, the family justice system is badly letting these children down and doing little more than helping bad parents ruin their future lives.



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Focus on : Youth Crime and Family Breakdown

50-strong armed gangs of youngsters roam the streets of South London with total disregard for the law - and Glasgow is not far behind.

Cathy Jamieson (Scotland's Justice Minister) promised to reduce hardcore youth offending by 10% last year. Instead it rose by 16%!

She called this "bitterly disappointing," but she still has no answer, and neither does any other major party.

[The Scotsman](#)
[Sat 2 Dec 2006](#)



An all too common sight.

But is it just another smashed phone box, or a symptom of a direction-less, disillusioned or bored youth?

Of course, we would not suggest that all youth crime is a direct result of the failure of the government's policies on family law.

But families are falling apart under Labour. Divorce rates are around 50% and about 25% of Scottish children live with a lone parent.

As if this isn't bad enough, estimates of the proportion of children **completely** cut off from one of their parents range from 20% up to 60%!

The evidence suggests that it is these youngsters who commit the majority (around 70%) of all youth crime.

[Scottish Executive Report 2004: Family formation and dissolution: Trends and attitudes among the Scottish population](#)

[Various Estimates](#)

"70% of youth crime is carried out by fatherless children and young adults (under 18)." Audit Commission report on teenage crime 2004.

If this startling statistic is true, then clearly there is a need for government policies which help separated parents maintain a meaningful relationship with their children after separation.

Unfortunately, government policies, with the help of a failing and dysfunctional family law system, encourage the exact opposite.

But why on earth would anyone want to exclude perfectly good fathers? Because that is Labour Party dogma. Harriet Harman and Patricia Hewitt are on record as questioning the need for fathers at all!

"It cannot therefore be assumed that men are bound to be an asset to family life, or that the presence of fathers in families is necessarily a means to social harmony and cohesion."

The Family Way: A New Approach to Policy Making, Coote, A, Hewitt, P. and Harman, H. 1990

With such an obvious lack of respect for parents and families from ministers within our government, it's no wonder kids are running wild!

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25% of Children have *no* relationship with one parent!

One strong source cites 60%: in 2003, the President of the High Court Family Division, Dame Elizabeth Butler-Sloss, gave this chilling statistic in a speech: "60% of fathers now have no meaningful relationship with their children post separation." [Complete text of speech.](#)

Other sources state between 15% - 40% Many children will lose all meaningful contact with the non-resident parent - estimates range from 15% up to 40% within two years .

The strongest sources are the 40% and 60%. Taking the mean between these as 50%, and applying it to the divorce rate gives **25% of Scottish children having no meaningful relationship with one or other parent.**

Although this figure may seem a little contrived, there is so little government funded research in this area, that we are forced to make the best of what data is available.

(The absence of such research is itself an indication that governments fear what such research would reveal about the consequences of their policies).

Blackwell, A. and Dawes, F., *Non-Resident Parental Contact*, based on data from the National Statistics Omnibus Survey for the Department for Constitutional Affairs, October 2003

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[Carrick Gazette 26th April 2007](#)



[Listen to Ray's interview with BBC Radio Scotland on Thursday 26th April](#)



[The **Sun** Scottish Edition 19th April 2007](#)



[Mail On Sunday 22nd April 2007](#)



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Statement from Ray in the Ayr Advertiser

Every year, thousands of children in Scotland lose a parent.

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These children's lives are permanently damaged - and many will lose half their grandparents and extended family too - for no good reason.

Traditional politics is increasingly irrelevant to our society, I think politics should be about ordinary, decent people doing what is right. I am proud to be standing for a new party, the Equal Parenting Alliance. Quite simply, we believe the family justice system should put the needs and rights of children before the rights and wishes of either parent.

I want the people of Scotland to have the chance to show they put the welfare of children before everything else. Of course, we would prefer to stand in every seat in Scotland, but being new we can't afford that! I therefore decided to stand here because Cathy Jamieson, as the Scottish Justice Minister, could have done something to help these children. She chose not to.

If you want to send a signal that the family justice system should protect and respect the rights of children, please give me your vote. This is not a vote for me, but a vote for your children and the generations to come.

Statement from Ray in the Ayrshire Post

I think traditional politics is increasingly irrelevant. For most of us, what really counts are our families, our friends, a job, a safe community, and to be left alone to enjoy our life without interference from politicians and bureaucrats.

Politics should be about ordinary, decent people doing what is right. I am proud to stand for the Equal Parenting Alliance, a new party aiming to restore dads, mums and grandparents to their proper place in children's lives.

Our party was formed because around half of children whose parents separate have no further meaningful relationship with one or other parent: usually dad, but occasionally mum. This practice of eliminating one or other parent was introduced by stealth, and it derives not from any need to protect children, but from a social experiment by Labour administrations to test the theory that fathers are unnecessary. See www.equal-parenting-scotland.com for details.

Our communities were the test-bed for this experiment, it failed, and we now struggle with increasingly disturbed behaviour by fatherless youngsters.

Vote for me. I have a real solution to anti-social behaviour. Others parties come up with expensive gimmicks, but I address its root cause: let dads and grandparents back into children's lives.



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Statement from Ray in the Carrick Gazette

Fathers-4-Justice

I have been reported in the press as a Fathers-4-Justice activist who protested live on TV at the Lottery Draw last year, and who took part in other stunts as well. As a 57-year-old Civil Servant, who once trained as a priest, I never dreamt I would ever do such things, but when your children are suddenly taken from you for no reason, it's amazing what you find yourself willing to do.

Now it is time to move on, and tackle head-on, on their own turf, those politicians responsible for causing this holocaust in families. That is why I joined the Equal Parenting Alliance party, and I am proud to be stand as it's candidate in this seat.

Is this a fathers rights party?

No. Although it is usually dads who are cut out of their children's lives after divorce, there are mums in our party that it has happened to as well. We believe the family justice system should put the welfare of children before the rights and wishes of either parent.

Parental alienation

Parental Alienation is one parent, usually the one the child lives with, deliberately poisoning the child's mind against the other parent. Around half of children lose touch with the parent they don't live with after they separate, and this is usually the reason. Although no parent ever admits to doing it, 56% of children who grew up in a single-parent household say it happened to them.

When it does happen, our failing family justice system will sit back and do nothing to protect the child's right to two parents, grandparents and a balanced family life.

Youth Crime

Children who grow up without their fathers are responsible for 70% of youth crime. So why do we allow dads and grandparents to be eliminated from children's lives, if this leads to crime and anti-social behaviour in our communities?

Because Labour have used our communities as play-things to test out their pet theories. Here is an extract from a policy paper written by Patricia Hewitt and Harriet Harman: "It cannot therefore be assumed that men are bound to be an asset to family life, or that the presence of fathers in families is necessarily a means to social harmony and cohesion."

Why stand in Carrick, Cumnock and Doon Valley?

As Justice Minister, Cathy Jamieson knows that fatherlessness causes youth crime. As deputy Labour leader, she could have ditched the crazy notion of her Westminster colleagues that fathers are irrelevant, but she chose not to.

I believe traditional politics is increasingly irrelevant. For most of us, what really counts are our families, our friends, a job, a safe community, and to be left alone to enjoy our life without interference from politicians and bureaucrats. Politics should be about ordinary, decent people doing what is right, and that is why I am standing against Cathy Jamieson.



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Parental Alienation in Action – How Mike's wife got rid of him for good !

My name is Mike, I'm Australian. Twenty years ago I worked for a few years in England for an engineering company and while I was there, I met and fell in love with a local girl, Susan.

We married six months later and were soon lucky enough to have a baby girl, Claudia.

"I'll never stop you seeing your daughter"

Things were blissful for a couple of years, but then started to go wrong and we realised we just couldn't go on living together. We agreed to separate and that Claudia would live with her mum, but Susan said she'd never stop me seeing Claudia.

We separated, Susan had the house (and most of my money!) but I was happy as I was still able to see Claudia and had her to stay in my flat a couple of nights a week.

Then, about six months later, Susan found a new boyfriend and soon he'd moved into her house. Things then began to go very quickly downhill. Suddenly my two overnight stays a week with Claudia became one night, later then this turned into me taking her home to sleep at her mother's after I'd given Claudia her tea after collecting her from nursery.

Access reduced - I could do little about it

I was not happy at all about the way the new arrangements were going, but reluctantly agreed to them as I didn't want to rock the boat - I knew it would be much better for Claudia if I could stay on good terms with Susan.

But things went from bad to worse. Susan started complaining that I was not looking after Claudia properly, though this wasn't true at all and she was obviously just trying to make things as difficult as possible for me.

Eventually I had no choice but to go to court to try and get my access to Claudia restored but the system did not help me at all, they just listened to her mother – who by now was saying she thought I was a bad influence on Claudia and I could not properly care for her. I did get one day a fortnight contact ordered by the court but Susan soon stopped even that by being 'out' whenever I went to collect her.

Wife's new partner now called 'daddy'

To cut a long story short, this carried on for a couple of years and I was hardly seeing Claudia at all. It was so upsetting for me when I did see her as it was obvious how confused she was to see daddy only once every couple of months for burger and chips. By then I knew she was calling Susan's new partner 'daddy'.

By this time I had ran out of money and lost my job due to stress and decided I couldn't stay in England for ever fighting to see my daughter. I returned to Australia to try and rebuild my life, hoping to be able to continue some sort of relationship with Claudia by letter.

For the next thirteen years, I sent a letter once a month to Claudia, and birthday and Christmas cards and

presents; but I never had a response, not once. I wrote to Susan many times but never had anything back from her either. I was determined not to give up completely, but realised that – for now – she had me beaten.

Waited till she was eighteen

The week after Claudia's eighteenth birthday, I decided to try and find her and re-establish contact now that her mother could no longer stop her seeing me. Tracking her down was fairly difficult, but after six months or so I managed to find an address for Claudia by employing an English solicitor and private investigation firm from Australia.

I wrote to Claudia, via my solicitor, saying I would like to get back in touch with her and hoped maybe I could eventually come over and see her if she would agree to that. I obviously knew it was going to be difficult for her to see me after so much time, I didn't even know if she was going to remember me as the last time I saw her she was just four years old! Maybe she'd heard so many bad stories about me she'd never want to see me at all?

The next few weeks waiting for a reply were the longest weeks of my life. Each day I waited for a phone call, letter or email; praying she would get in touch. Eventually, after about six weeks, I got a reply from my English solicitor, saying that Claudia had been in touch with them and that she did want to meet me. Of course, I was overjoyed to hear this.

My daughter thought I was dead

Imagine my shock though, when my solicitor told me that Claudia's mother had always told Susan I was dead!

Susan had told Claudia that I had died when she was four years old. It suddenly became clear why I had never received replies to any of my letters or presents, Susan must have intercepted them for all those years. I could hardly believe anyone could do such a terrible thing to their own daughter, or expect to get away with it for ever.

I've been over to England twice now to see Claudia since we got in touch and she's coming over this summer to stay with me in Australia for a few weeks and do some travelling.

So at least my story ends fairly happily, even though the intervening years have been full of despair and heartache. She's a lovely girl – though she's a young woman now of course – it's hard for me not to think of her as that little baby girl I used to hold all those years ago. Claudia is very angry with her mother and hasn't spoken to her for six months.

In her last letter Claudia said she was thinking of coming over to work in Australia in her gap year and stay with me for a while.

I do so hope she does.



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EPA POLICY SUMMARY

Parenting (Contact) Time

Legal Presumption of Reasonable Parenting Time

We call for a legal presumption of reasonable parenting time for children and both parents, in the event of parental separation.

Shared Residence should be 'Normal'

A Shared Residence arrangement should be the normal arrangement when there are two fit, capable parents; not the rare exception it is now.

Good Reason Principle

All contact and parenting time arrangements will be governed by the *Good Reason Principle*: they will apply in ALL cases where there is no *good*

Immediate Improvement Possible

Introduction of Early Interventions Pilot Project

We call for the immediate introduction of [the Early Interventions Pilot Project](#), to replace the failed



The current effective presumption is that a non-resident parent has *no* parenting time with a child. We believe normal, fit parents should not have to go to court just to assert the right of their children to enjoy love and care from both parents.

Shared Residence (where parents share the legal responsibility and care of the child) was the clear intention of the Children Act 1989. This has never been implemented by family courts.

Our *Good Reason Principle* is that there must be a *good* reason for delaying or preventing contact between a child and parent. Currently the family courts will accept *any* reason – no matter how trivial – as adequate to frustrate contact.

The Early Interventions Project is a template-based model of contact based on a system implemented in Florida. This Labour government tried to implement it, but failed to understand it themselves and made such a hash of it that they ended up opposing their own project!



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Improving the Court Process

Compulsory Mediation

Mediation to be compulsory for both parents after separation and before entering into the court system. Any parent refusing to attend may be so ordered by the court and on subsequent refusal will be charged with contempt of court.

Open Family Courts

All Family Court cases involving children to be transparent, open and accountable, and all reporting to be anonymised to protect children from publicity.

Enforcement of Court Orders

Court orders for contact, parenting time and shared or joint residence, must be enforced by the courts unless there is good reason to do otherwise..

Allegations in Family Courts Made Under Oath

All allegations of domestic violence or child abuse made by one party against the other during a child contact case, should be made under oath, and dealt with quickly by a criminal court capable of delivering a clear verdict. This is in order to prevent such allegations being made maliciously; and to ensure the safety of the alleged victim and any other children the alleged perpetrator is in contact with.



It is far better if couples can sort things out for themselves before resorting to courts. Requiring all couples to attend mediation would be a step to help more parents do this.

Family Courts are conducted in total secrecy. While this provides some protection for the child, the secrecy also has many harmful effects.

Courts prefer to ignore the breaking of their own orders. It is up to the non-resident parent to apply to court to enforce an order the court has already made. This means there is little incentive for resident parents to ever comply with an order.

False allegations are routinely used to frustrate contact, a problem rarely – if ever – addressed by the courts. If the courts are ever to 'put children first' we believe this practice should be strongly discouraged.

Even when allegations are admitted or shown to be false or malicious, family courts prefer to ignore the harm this has done to the children affected.



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EPA POLICY SUMMARY

Respecting Children

Recognition of Parental Alienation

Any parent who deliberately harms a child's relationship with either parent, without good reason, should be treated as being guilty of emotional and psychological abuse of the child. Furthermore, we call on the government and the authorities to recognise Parental Alienation as emotional abuse of



We believe family courts should take responsibility for protecting children from emotional abuse, and not protect and encourage the perpetrators.

Parental Responsibility

Automatic Parental Responsibility for Both Parents

All fathers, regardless of marital status, or whether they are named on the birth certificate of their natural child, to be given parental responsibility. Where paternity is in doubt, a DNA test must be used to decide the issue.

Parental Responsibility to have Legal Backing

Both parents must have full access to a child's medical and educational records, and full involvement in school activities regardless of their residence status.

Currently, mothers automatically have PR but fathers only get PR if they are married to the mother, or if the mother chooses to name them on the birth certificate.

Currently, PR means little in practice as the law governing how public bodies recognise it is unclear.

We propose to clearly define how a parent with PR must be treated.

Grandparents play a vital role in the care and upbringing of children, the law should recognise their role and status. Currently grandparents have to ask the court for permission to even seek contact with their grand-children.

We believe that children's right to have and enjoy a relationship with their grandparents should be protected, just as it should be with their parents.

We support introduction of the [Charter for Grandchildren](#)