

# MAKING A DIFFERENCE FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES







# WELCOME TO OUR ANNUAL REPORT



Over the last year we have worked hard in the Centre to bring the messages from our research even closer to practice and to policy. The Secure Base model of therapeutic caregiving is now well-established with a web site which is used around the world. Wider take up of the model is being driven forward not just by its authors, Prof Gillian Schofield and Dr Mary Beek, but also by enthusiastic and knowledgeable advocates within agencies who develop training and other areas of practice. Messages for post adoption contact from Prof Beth Neil's work have been well embedded in UK practice and policy and are also making a real difference in other European countries and in Australia. Materials from Dr Jeanette Cossar's study of children's perspectives on child protection, from the iCAN website, are being used as mandatory training for staff working within the inspection body Ofsted.

We have relied on our research and practice partners to help us to translate findings from recently completed studies into practice tools. Young researchers from Dr Jeanette Cossar's innovative *Speak Out* study, supporting LGBTQ young people in care, have worked closely with Jeanette and researchers to develop training materials. Fathers from the *Counting Fathers In* study worked with Dr Georgia Philip to talk on film about their experiences of child protection.

We have a number of new studies this year and are very pleased that we are able to continue our Nuffield funded work on fathers' perspectives. This time we are working with Lancaster University on the subject of fathers in recurrent care proceedings where we are examining

the extent and scale of this phenomenon as well as learning about fathers' experiences. Prof Beth Neil is beginning an exciting new ESRC funded two generation study of identity risk and resilience in adoptive families, where she and her team will be seeking to understand the experiences of adoptive parents and adoptive parents (now grandparents). Another new study this year is our sixth consecutive national analysis of serious case reviews with Prof Jonathan Dickens joining the established CRCF/Warwick University serious case review team.

This year's Annual Centre Conference sees the launch of findings from Jonathan's ESRC funded study examining the outcomes of care proceedings before and after the reforms to time scales which he conducted together with Prof Judith Masson from Bristol University.

It's clear from reading this report that the Centre's activities rely on building and extending strong networks and collaborations with funders and research partners in agencies and with fellow researchers and academics at other universities in the UK and internationally. We also depend on the relationships we build with our research participants, the children and families at the centre of this report, who help us to understand their world and to frame messages that we and they hope will improve services.

**MARIAN BRANDON**

*Professor of Social Work,  
Director of the Centre for Research  
on Children and Families.*



# NEWS INTERNATIONAL COLLABORATION: MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO POLICY AND PRACTICE

**The CRCF is involved in a wide range of international collaborations influencing policy and practice. These include consultation to agencies and governments, practice developments, partnerships and networks.**

## AUSTRALIA

The government of New South Wales (NSW) have introduced legislation to achieve 'permanency' for children in care, including the option of open adoption. There are significant barriers to be overcome in implementing this policy, and a pressing need to educate professionals about how to plan and support positive contact arrangements. To promote the policy the NSW government have funded the 'Institute for Open Adoption' (IOA) headed by the University of Sydney.

Prof Beth Neil was invited by the University of Sydney, and their practice partners Barnardos, for a week-long programme of activities in August 2017. Beth was a keynote speaker at a day conference to launch the Institute. She also contributed to a panel presentation on post adoption contact at the University of Sydney's 'Sydney ideas' public lecture, which was introduced by the Minister for Children in New South Wales. The public lecture has been published online as a podcast <https://soundcloud.com/sydney-ideas/contact-and-openness-in-adoption>.

While at the Institute Beth worked with IOA colleagues to draft an Australian Research Council 'linkage' grant for practice developments in post adoption contact in NSW. The project may replicate Beth's development project collaboration with Research in Practice. Don't forget to keep a check on this adoption contact website [www.contact.rip.org.uk](http://www.contact.rip.org.uk)

Dr Amy Conley Wright (Director of the Institute for Open Adoption) underlined the importance of Beth's contribution to launching and establishing the IOA and to her ongoing collaborations with the Institute and the University of Sydney.

## GERMANY

The German government have been reviewing policy about the use of adoption for children in care, and have funded the German Youth Institute (DJI) to set up a Research Center on Adoption (EFZA) to inform this policy review. Beth was commissioned by EFZA to support this review, initially by writing a report of research about supporting the birth parents of adopted children (Neil 2017) and subsequently at EFZA workshops. The results of the research report have been incorporated into the two key publications of the EFZA (Bovenschen et al. 2017a; Bovenschen et al. 2017b) which are published at the website of the DJI: [www.dji.de/ueber-uns/projekte/projekte/expertise-undforschungszentrum-adoption-efza/projekt-publikationen.html](http://www.dji.de/ueber-uns/projekte/projekte/expertise-undforschungszentrum-adoption-efza/projekt-publikationen.html)



## EUROPEAN NETWORKS

Prof June Thoburn continues to work with international socio-legal scholars led by Prof Marit Skiivenes of the University of Bergen in Norway. Colleagues from Austria, England, Estonia, Finland, Germany, Ireland, Norway and Spain are examining the reasoning underpinning judicial decisions on applications for the removal of new-borns in each of these countries. The group met in Paris in March 2018 and June went to Bergen to work with the team on coding systems.

## FOUR COUNTRY COLLABORATION

Prof Jonathan Dickens continues his work on the four country study on decision making in child welfare and is actively collaborating with Profs Marit Skiivenes (Norway) Jill Berrick (USA) and Tarja Poso (Finland). The group have a number of recent publications arising from this work (see page 38).

## NEWS

# INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR OUTCOME BASED EVALUATION AND RESEARCH (IAOBER)

The annual meeting of this international group of social work scholars was held at the Chinese University of Hong Kong in September 2017. Marian Brandon presented a paper for this group on the relationship between evidence and outcomes in mixed methods studies using the example of the *Counting fathers* study. Marian also presented findings from this study as part of a two day international conference 'New Perspectives for Outcome-based Evaluation and

Research on Family and Children's Services' at the same University in Hong Kong. Her paper was 'Men as a Risk and a Resource in Child Protection'.

June Thoburn and Marian are both founding members of IAOBER who are holding their 15th anniversary meeting next year in Rome. CRCF's three international visitors this year, Jill Berrick, Jackie Sanders, Elizabeth Fernandez, are also members of IAOBER.

# NEWS

## INFLUENCING POLICY AND PRACTICE CLOSER TO HOME

### POTENTIAL ADOPTION POLICY DEVELOPMENTS IN ENGLAND

The Adoption Leadership Board (ALB) was established by the Department for Education in 2014 to provide leadership to the adoption system and drive improvements in performance. Prof Beth Neil has been collaborating with the ALB to inform their 'Future of Adoption and Special Guardianship Support Project'. She has met to discuss her research with Andrew Christie (head of ALB) and with Hannah Smith (who is working on the review) and she was a speaker at a mixed audience event organised by the ALB in London on 19th March 2018.

Prof Gillian Schofield was also involved as research/policy advisor for the Department for Education (DfE) on long-term fostering. She was invited to a meeting in August 2017 with Sir Martin Narey and Mark Owers, Chairs of the Review of Fostering in England, and also invited by DfE Head of Fostering, Jenny Briggs, to an expert round table in March 2018 to discuss implications of their report for policy and practice.

### FEEDING INTO BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS (BASW) REVIEW OF ADOPTION

Beth Neil was interviewed by Prof Brid Featherstone one of the review authors, to offer her expert views on the place of contact in a modern adoption system. The report was published in January 2018 and one of its five recommendations included the need to review the current model of adoption and consider the potential for a more open approach. The report cites the work of Beth and her team as a useful basis for taking these developments further.

### RSA FELLOW

Marian Brandon has become an invited Fellow of the Royal Society for the Arts (RSA). As a Fellow Marian is now part of a global network of 29,000 people supporting the RSA's mission to enrich society through ideas and action.





# NEWS

## LAUNCH OF TWO IMPORTANT CRCF STUDIES IN 2017

### SPEAKING OUT

The 2017 CRCF annual conference launched the ESRC funded ground-breaking SpeakOUT research which is the first national study of the needs LGBTQ young people in care. Jeanette Cossar and Gillian Schofield were joined by the team of young researchers for a full day's presentation of discussion and findings from interviews with young people and foster carers, focus groups with professionals and a national survey of local authority provision.

The audience were around 100 practitioners in the fields of youth work, social work and LGBTQ support services, as well as representatives of national charities. A highlight of the day was a panel session run by the young researchers, all of whom identify as LGBTQ and are care experienced, where they presented their top tips for professionals, and took questions. The event generated ideas for training, which will feed into the ongoing development project run by Jeanette and team with funding from CLAHRC (Collaboration for Leadership in Applied Health Research and Care).

### CHILD PROTECTION – MENS' EXPERIENCE

The findings of the important and innovative Nuffield-funded study of men's experiences of the child protection system, were launched in London in July 2017. Marian Brandon, Georgia Philip and John Clifton presented key findings and practice messages. The event, at the Nuffield Foundation offices was attended by around 50 people, including civil servants, other policy makers, practitioners and senior managers from Children's Services, academics and researchers, and staff from national family/child welfare charities. Professor Margaret O'Brien (UCL Coram), Anthony Douglas (Cafcass) and Kate Mulley (Action for Children) offered their reflections in a panel discussion chaired by Tracey Budd from the Nuffield Foundation. The executive summary and the full research report is available on the CRCF website.



# INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCES

## 8th BIENNIAL INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

REDISCOVERING EMPATHY, VALUES AND  
RELATIONSHIPS IN A CHANGING WORLD

Emeritus Prof David Howe gave the opening keynote lecture, 'Empathy, Emotional Intelligence and Relationship-Based Practice' at this conference at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, University of Galway, Ireland in June 2017.

## 9th INTERNATIONAL FOSTERING RESEARCH NETWORK CONFERENCE 2017

In September 2017 in Paris, at this conference titled 'Continuity and Disruption in Foster Care', Prof Gillian Schofield presented a paper 'Fostering LGBTQ young people in care: Managing continuities and discontinuities of relationships and identities' and Dr Mary Beek presented a paper 'Continuities and discontinuities in the move from a short-term foster family to a long-term family'. On the day after the academic conference, a practice conference for over 200 French social workers was held and Gillian was invited to give a presentation on the Secure Base model of therapeutic caregiving.

## BASPCAN 10th INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

This major international congress, held at the University of Warwick in April 2018, brought together practitioners, survivors of abuse, researchers, trainers and policy makers to learn from each other, reflect and consider how to improve services to support families and protect children and young people. The overall conference title was 'Thinking Outside the Box: innovative perspectives on protecting children and young people'.

CRCF was well represented at this conference where Prof Jonathan Dickens and Julie Young used their care proceedings data to present 'Assessing the wellbeing of children who have been the subject of child protection proceedings'. From the *Counting Fathers* study Dr Georgia Philip presented 'Engaging fathers in child protection: whose time is it anyway?' Jane Hermon presented emerging findings from her PhD thesis and her title was 'Disabled young people and their caregivers' perspectives of child protection intervention in England'.

Dr Peter Sidebotham, from Warwick University was the conference convenor. Peter is a long-standing collaborator with Marian and the UEA team on the national analysis of serious case reviews, including the current triennial analysis. Congratulations to Peter for curating a really worthwhile and creative event. The cartoons from Harry Venning were much appreciated at the time and on Twitter.

## 8th EUROPEAN CONFERENCE FOR SOCIAL WORK RESEARCH

A contingent from CRCF travelled to Edinburgh for this conference in April 2018. The conference theme was 'Social Work in Transition: Challenges for Social Work Research in a Changing Local and Global World'. Dr John Clifton used findings from the *Counting Fathers* study to present a paper 'Relationship-based research: exploring the benefits in a study of fathers'. Paul McGrath presented a poster on his PhD theme of the support needs of grandparents with Special Guardianship Orders.

## WORLD CONFERENCE ON SOCIAL WORK, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Dr Ann Anka is attending this year's conference in Dublin in July 2018. She is presenting a paper 'Relationship-based practice: Promoting the importance of human relationships with adults who self-neglect through hoarding in England' and a poster 'Social work interventions with adults who self-neglect in England: responding to the Care Act 2014'.







# NATIONAL CONFERENCES

## SOCIAL WORK ACTION NETWORK (SWAN)

In April 2018 June Thoburn gave keynote papers on 'The Crisis in Children's Services' at the Social Work Action Network (SWAN) annual conference at the University of Essex Southend Conference and on 'Collaborative Practice with Vulnerable families' at a day workshop organised by Huddersfield University on children, poverty and inequality.

## SPEAK OUT

In July 2017 Jeanette Cossar presented the findings from her LGBTQ study to an audience of over 100 lawyers and other professionals at a conference entitled 'Together: Psychological, sociological and personal perspectives on resilience'. The talk, which discussed how best to promote the resilience of LGBTQ young people growing up in care, was well received, leading to interest in developing a webinar to promote messages for practice across international networks.

## CHILDREN'S SERVICES – DOING THINGS DIFFERENTLY

In June 2017 Marian Brandon, Georgia Philip and John Clifton presented learning from their *Counting Fathers In* study at an Eastern regional conference for Children's Services senior managers, entitled 'Doing things Differently'. In November 2017 the team co-designed and presented, with Essex County Council, a half day event on working more effectively with fathers. Both events were attended by around 100 delegates.

# NEWS

## CRCF EVENTS AND SEMINARS

### ANNUAL CHILDCARE LECTURE

We were very fortunate to host Prof Jill Berrick, social work professor from the University of California, Berkeley, at CRCF in April 2018. Jill delivered the Annual Child Care Lecture 'The impossible imperative: navigating the competing principles of child protection' based on her recently published book of the same title. She also gave a presentation exploring the linkages between family poverty and child maltreatment. In the two presentations, Jill made her insights into social work in the US highly relevant for UK practice and had the audience captivated with her positive messages and gentle warnings.

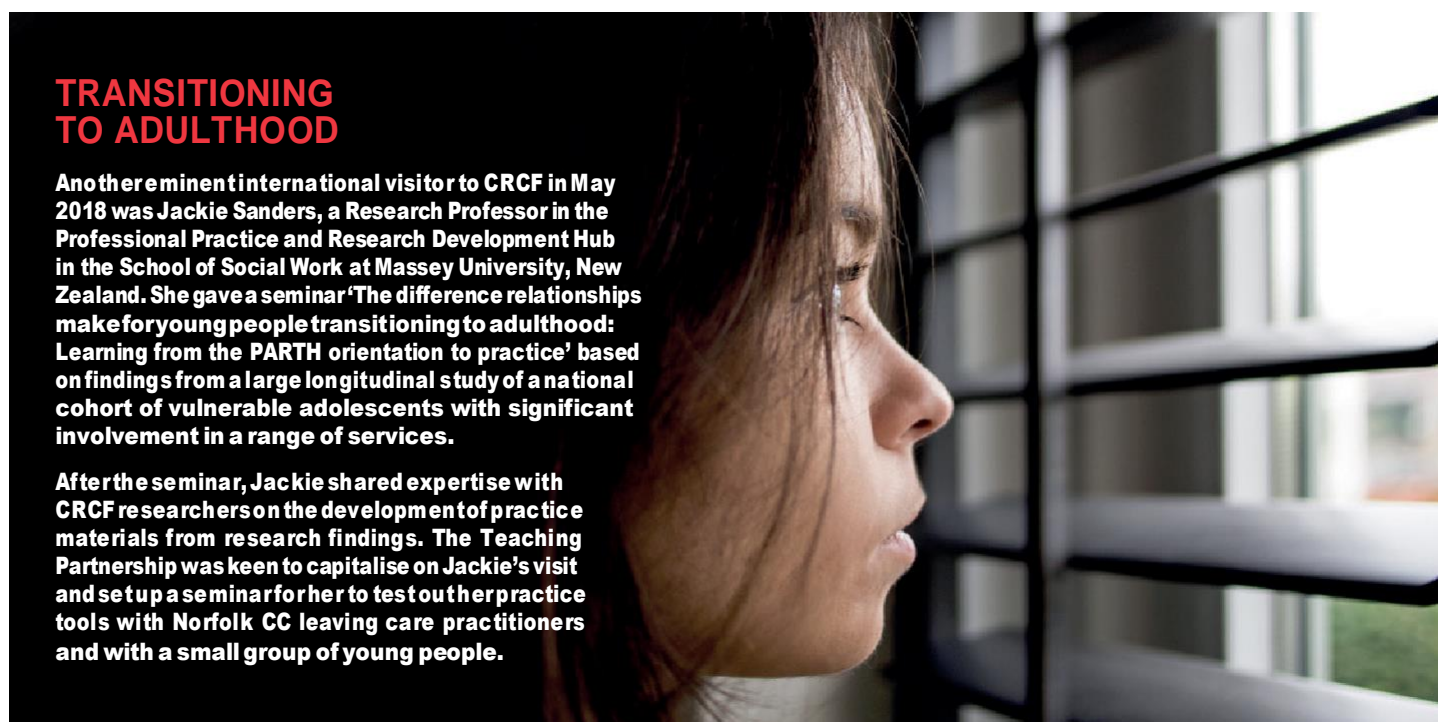
The half day event which also included a reprise of CRCF members' BASPCAN presentations, was jointly hosted by CRCF and the Department for Education funded Teaching Partnership between Social Work at UEA, Norfolk and Suffolk County Councils and the University of Suffolk. The event was attended by almost 100 practitioners, students and academics.



### TRANSITIONING TO ADULTHOOD

Another eminent international visitor to CRCF in May 2018 was Jackie Sanders, a Research Professor in the Professional Practice and Research Development Hub in the School of Social Work at Massey University, New Zealand. She gave a seminar 'The difference relationships make for young people transitioning to adulthood: Learning from the PARTH orientation to practice' based on findings from a large longitudinal study of a national cohort of vulnerable adolescents with significant involvement in a range of services.

After the seminar, Jackie shared expertise with CRCF researchers on the development of practice materials from research findings. The Teaching Partnership was keen to capitalise on Jackie's visit and set up a seminar for her to test out her practice tools with Norfolk CC leaving care practitioners and with a small group of young people.



## NEWS

# 2018 ANNUAL CONFERENCE

The 2018 annual CRCF conference being held at Woburn House in London in June is 'Outcomes of care proceedings for children before and after care proceedings reform'. The conference provides an opportunity to hear and discuss the findings from this important ESRC funded study carried out by Prof Jonathan Dickens and Julie Young from CRCF

and Prof Judith Masson and her team from Bristol University. Major reforms to care proceedings were introduced in 2013, to reduce the usual duration to 26 weeks. This conference reveals the results of these changes in terms of the process of care proceedings, the orders made and the longer-term outcomes for children.



## NEWS

# AUTUMN 2017 CRCF SEMINAR SERIES

For the autumn 2017 CRCF seminar series we welcomed three outside contributors including Prof Elizabeth Fernandez from the University of NSW Australia, who spoke about the harrowing experiences of former child migrants. Anthony Douglas, Chief Executive of Cafcass, held a seminar with social work students to discuss telephone social work. Our other visiting speaker was Dr Wendy Marsh from the Centre for Research in Nursing and Midwifery Education, University of Surrey who spoke about her doctoral thesis involving babies removed at birth and the narratives of mothers and midwives.

Other seminars in the autumn series were:

Designing a mobile app to promote student wellbeing – Dr Laura Biggart and Dr Kamena Henshaw.

Understanding the pathways out of care for children in one local authority: a longitudinal analysis of LAC903 data – Dr Lisanne Gitsels and Prof Beth Neil.

The joys and challenges of adoptive family life: the views of adoptive parents – Julie Young, Dr Marcello Morciano and Prof Beth Neil.



# IMPACT

## MAKING A DIFFERENCE



### IMPACT | IMPROVING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE IN POST ADOPTION CONTACT

Beth Neil's work in Australia and Germany over the last year (see page 2) has formed part of the programme of impact activities in this field. Over the last year post adoption contact has been attracting attention from policy makers in the UK and around the globe and there is also keen interest from practitioners. Beth is still working with the dissemination organisation Research in Practice and together they are updating the website. The website holds a range of practice resources to help practitioners make evidence based decisions about post adoption contact. Julie Young is introducing these materials to practitioners around the country at a series of events. The website is still available during the updating process and do keep a check on what's new.

[www.contact.rip.org.uk](http://www.contact.rip.org.uk)

**PROF BETH NEIL  
AND JULIE YOUNG**





Over the last year we've been translating research into training for practitioners.

## IMPACT | SUPPORTING LGBTQ YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

This first study of LGBTQ young people in care in England has provided new knowledge and understanding that can inform the care and support for lesbian, gay, bisexual or transgender (LGBTQ) young people in care, highlighting their strengths, vulnerabilities and support needs. The ESRC funded *Speak out* study (2014-2017) collected data from care experienced LGBTQ young people, foster carers and from local authorities.

Thanks to follow up funding from CLAHRC, (2017-18) we have been able to work with young researchers and other research partners to co-produce accessible training materials for professionals working with LGBTQ young people in care. We are also in the finishing stages of producing an animated film, which shares experiences of young people in care from across England. The film is aimed at foster carers, residential staff, social workers and educators and will be disseminated via YouTube and on the dedicated research microsite [www.uea.ac.uk/speakout](http://www.uea.ac.uk/speakout)

Over the next 12 months we are piloting the training materials for professionals and foster carers in a number of local authorities, fostering agencies and with Break a local charity providing residential care and therapeutic foster care. We are also working closely with Become, formerly the Who Cares Trust, who have supported the recruitment and wellbeing of the young researchers. A summary of the research is now available on the CRCF website.

**DR JEANETTE COSSAR,  
DR PENNY SORENSEN AND  
DR PIPPABELDERSON**



# IMPACT | THE SECURE BASE MODEL OF THERAPEUTIC CAREGIVING

The importance of therapeutic care for children from troubled backgrounds has continued to be highlighted in policy and practice, with current concerns about mental health having particular relevance for children in care. The Secure Base model, developed by Gillian Schofield and Mary Beek, is an attachment and resilience based framework for therapeutic caregiving which has been adopted by local authorities and independent organisations as the basis for a range of practice activities that can benefit caregivers, social workers and, ultimately, children's development and well-being. These include training and supporting foster carers, adopters, residential care staff and social work staff; assessing and matching children with placements; supporting children's successful development in placement; helping children move between placements; working with young offenders; providing therapeutic residential child care.

The Secure Base model has been implemented by a range of new agencies this year, as well as being taken forward into new areas of practice by agencies for whom the model is already well-established. At our 2nd Secure Base Network Meeting in March 2018, agencies from the statutory and independent sector discussed their varied experiences of implementation. One of the strongest messages was the value that those caring directly for children – foster carers, adopters, residential workers – place on the Secure Base model as an accessible and practical way to think about what children need and what they as caregivers can focus on in helping children to resolve their difficulties and build their strengths. What is also clear is the importance to an agency of enthusiastic and knowledgeable advocates of the Secure Base model, who drive forward the development of training and other areas of practice. It was very encouraging to see that agencies now had staff who had a specific role in training and developing Secure Base work.

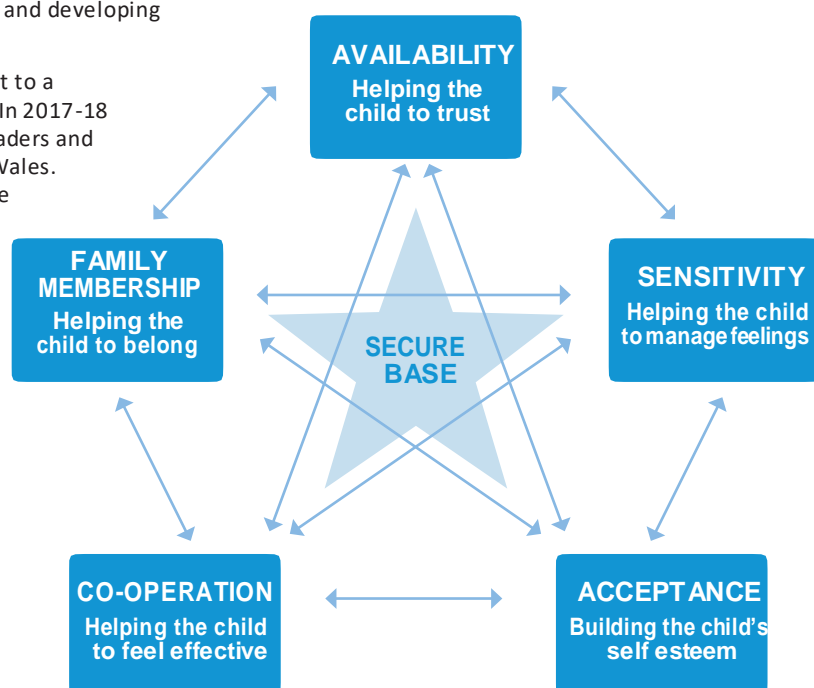
Gillian and Mary continue to offer input to a certain number of agencies each year. In 2017-18 this has included work with practice leaders and agency staff in England, Scotland and Wales. Further afield, Gillian visited Melbourne in October 2017 to undertake follow up work with the staff from Berry Street, a major provider of foster care services to the state of Victoria who are committed to implementing the Secure Base model in their work. This visit included a presentation at Berry Street's Annual Celebration at the Melbourne Cricket Ground.

**PROF GILLIAN SCHOFIELD  
AND DR MARY BEEK**

In March 2018, Mary was invited to Lviv, Ukraine, to work for three days with Care in Action, a German based NGO, and Ukrainian foster carers and trainers. In Ukraine, as in other areas where Mary has helped to implement the Secure Base model such as China and Thailand, family foster care is being introduced as part of the drive to deinstitutionalise. The framework provided by the Secure Base enables new foster carers and support workers to focus both on children's developmental needs and the caregiving that can meet those needs. In Ukraine, Mary worked with foster carers who were keen to develop local, culturally relevant examples of secure base caregiving and professionals who were thinking creatively about how the model might be implemented in different settings.

Also of value to developments in Secure Base practice have been the opportunities to apply the model in research. It has, for example, proved a very helpful way to think about foster carers' tasks in caring for LGBTQ young people in care. We have also used the model, and in particular the Secure Base Developmental Checklists, in our Moving to Adoption practice development study.

To support all of these developments, Gillian and Mary have produced for 2018 a second edition of the *Attachment Handbook for Foster Care and Adoption* (2006), ensuring that this influential text reflects the language and practice of the Secure Base model, as presented in the website [www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase](http://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase) and in the practice guides from 2014, also published by CoramBAAF.





# IMPACT | DEVELOPING SOCIAL WORK TEAMS AS A SECURE BASE

Social work is a rewarding profession where positive changes for children and families can be achieved yet, at the same time, the work and demands can be emotional, challenging and have a negative effect on individual social workers physical and psychological health. Emotional resilience is understood to be an essential attribute for social workers, and organisations have a duty of care for their staffs' health and safety. Providing training about emotional resilience is one way that organisations are responding to provide support, however not much is known about the type or quality of training being provided.

Since our development last year of a Secure Base framework to support social work staff, we have been rolling out our half day training on coping and developing teams as a secure base to frontline staff with local authorities, third sector counselling organisations and an NHS Leadership programme. We have also developed a day's training for supervisors and managers on developing teams as a secure base to promote staff resilience and competence. We will be

working with local authorities to evaluate this training over the next year and are interested in hearing from local authorities wishing to evaluate the training. The training resources will become available on the Secure base website after we have trialled them.

The Team as a Secure Base model was included in the Cafcass National Operating Framework 2017 and Laura was invited to present the Team as Secure Base model at the North-West Midlands Teaching Partnership World Social Work day conference in March 2018. Laura also presented the model at the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, 8th Biennial International Conference in June 2017.

In 2017, Laura and her team (Emma Ward and Pippa Belderson) launched a national survey of Emotional Resilience training for staff currently being delivered for UK Children's Services Developing teams as a secure base.

[www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase](http://www.uea.ac.uk/providingasecurebase)

**DR LAURA BIGGART,  
DR EMMA WARD,  
DR LAURA COOK,  
DR PIPPA BELDERSON,  
PROF GILLIAN SCHOFIELD  
AND DR MARY BEEK**



## IMPACT | iCAN WEBSITE LAUNCH



The iCAN website with training materials, based on the research led by Cossar and Brandon, was launched in July 2017. It includes free to access videos, case studies and training sessions aimed initially at the education sector. The site content is currently being adapted for children's services, health and criminal justice agencies. The website was endorsed by the Children's Commissioner for England, Anne Longfield (pictured).

"This new website is a welcome practical tool for those adults best placed to notice changes in a child's behaviour, those in schools and colleges. I'm pleased that much of the basis for the work on iCAN came from adults actually asking children what they thought and thereby put them at the heart and the start of the project. I'd urge all teachers to take

a look at iCAN and see it as another useful step forward in keeping children safer."

Ofsted are using the resources as a new training module in their online mandatory safeguarding training for all staff working with Schools, Further Educations and Skills Institutions, Early Years and Social Care. There is a particular focus on the 'Telling' aspect of the research to support Ofsted staff, including inspectors, to better understand why children do not always speak about abuse and to increase awareness and understanding of the ways children may choose to speak about abuse.

All schools in Norfolk have been sent a training pack as a suggested preferred resource for safeguarding training.

[www.uea.ac.uk/ican](http://www.uea.ac.uk/ican)

## IMPACT | CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVES ON CHILDPROTECTION

Research funded by the Office for the Children's Commissioner and led by Jeanette Cossar analysed how children recognise abuse, their processes of telling, and what they think of the help on offer. Practice tools have now been developed from the study's findings thanks to Impact Accelerator and HEIF funding. This funding has enabled Penny Sorensen to work alongside Jeanette to create resources and develop the iCAN website.

DR JEANETTE COSSAR AND  
DR PENNY SORENSEN



# IMPACT | FATHERS' PERSPECTIVES ON CHILD PROTECTION

The *Counting Fathers In* study, funded by the Nuffield Foundation, explored the lives and perspectives of fathers involved in child protection. The men's voices produced a number of powerful messages for social work practice. In the summer of 2017 Georgia Philip was granted an award from the ESRC Impact Accelerator Fund to extend the reach of the practice messages and to strengthen the power of the insights generated about men's lives as fathers through a development project which had a number of strands.

**THE FILM PROJECT** included a co-produced video and audio resources with a small group of fathers who had taken part in the original study. These resources are now available for us to use for teaching, training and dissemination. This project has produced valuable and insightful stories from a group of men whose voices are rarely heard. It also strengthened our working relationships with the men who participated, leading to agreement from two, to get involved with the School of Social Work's Service Users and Carer's group, and to act as consultants on our current Nuffield funded study of fathers in recurrent care proceedings.

**WORKING WITH MEN IN FAMILIES** The short films have been used to support teaching on our newly developed Masters level Continuing Professional Development (CPD) module 'Working with Men in Families', delivered for the first time in September 2017. The module was successfully delivered in two sites in the Eastern region in autumn 2017 and will be offered again in future years. We hope to further develop our research-based teaching and learning resources and make them more widely accessible.

**WEBINAR** Georgia has produced a short film presenting key practice messages from *Counting Fathers In*. This can be used for CPD and other training/dissemination events, and will be made available via the CRCF website.

**GUEST BLOGPOST** Georgia has contributed a guest post to the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) blog entitled 'Working with qualitative longitudinal data', where she reflects on the challenges of managing the volume and depth of data generated in a qualitative longitudinal analysis of men's experiences of the UK child protection system.


**OTHER PRESENTATIONS** The research team have delivered keynote presentations around the country and in Hong Kong (see Research for Practice Section) and are continuing to develop the routes to impact for our research, on a national and international level. We are doing this through our links to the All Party Parliamentary Group on Fatherhood, the organisations Working with Men and The Fatherhood Institute. *Counting Fathers In* is also cited and features as a key resource in the 2017 Research In Practice Briefing Document 'Working effectively with men in families'.

**DR GEORGIA PHILIP,  
PROF MARIAN BRANDON  
AND DR JOHN CLIFTON**

**Our activities influence practice at both frontline and strategic levels and highlight the importance of working inclusively with fathers.**





A full-page background image showing a person in silhouette standing on a grassy bank, looking out over a calm body of water towards a distant shoreline under a twilight sky. The person is wearing a hooded jacket and trousers. The sky has soft pink and blue hues, and the water reflects the light. The overall mood is contemplative and serene.

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The research briefings make our studies  
easily accessible for practitioners,  
policy makers and other researchers.

# A LOOK AT BRIEFINGS

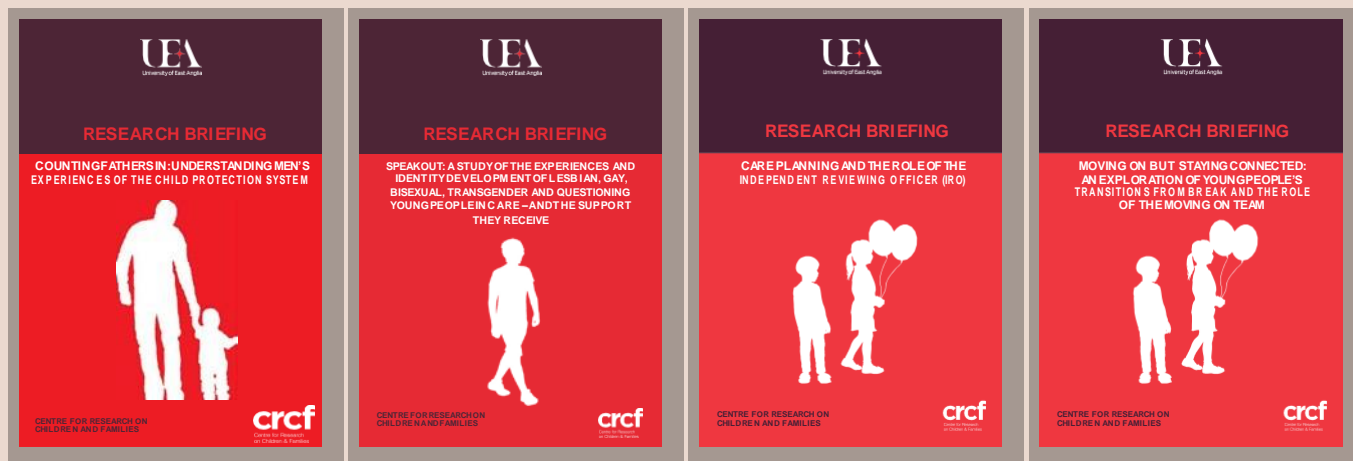
Our research briefings are useful summaries of completed CRCF studies. A set of these briefings of studies dating back to 2014 is available on the CRCF website.

[www.uea.ac.uk/crcf](http://www.uea.ac.uk/crcf)



## RESEARCH INTERNS

The research briefings were initially developed by Louise Hartley who was joined as an intern last summer by fellow social work students Stephen Beadle who worked on the *Counting Fathers In* study and Danielle Holmes who worked on the *Outcomes of Care Proceedings* study.



# RESEARCH PROJECTS

## CHILD PROTECTION AND FAMILY SUPPORT

<b>Anevaluation of <i>Your Own Enterprise</i>: An intervention for young people on the edge of serious and organised crime</b>	<b>20</b>
<b>Triennial review of serious case reviews</b>	<b>21</b>
<b>Establishing outcomes of care proceedings for children before and after care proceedings reform</b>	<b>22</b>
<b>Up against it: Fathers' experiences of recurrent care proceedings</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>A systematic literature review: Trans parenting through the life course</b>	<b>25</b>

## CHILD PLACEMENT

<b>From care, to adoption, to parenting: A two generation study of identity, risk and resilience in adoptive families</b>	<b>27</b>
<b>Pathways and outcomes for children in need, at risk, in care and adopted from care</b>	<b>28</b>
<b>The Yorkshire and Humberside regional adoption project research</b>	<b>29</b>
<b>Moving to adoption: The development and piloting of a practice programme</b>	<b>31</b>
<b>Evaluation of dyadic developmental psychotherapy/practice programme (DDP): An adoption support intervention</b>	<b>32</b>





# AN EVALUATION OF YOUR OWN ENTERPRISE: AN INTERVENTION FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON THE EDGE OF SERIOUS AND ORGANISED CRIME

JUL 2017 – MAR 2018

RESEARCH TEAM Dr Jane Dodsworth and Dr Penny Sorensen

FUNDER Home Office



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

Vulnerable young people in Norfolk are facing a significant threat from organised criminals from other areas of the country. Some become victims of 'cuckooing' where drug dealers befriend vulnerable people and then take over their home to use it as a drug den. 'Your Own Place' is a community interest company that works with young people in transition to tackle homelessness. It has a focus on young people's assets rather than deficits.

Your Own Place secured funding from the Home Office to deliver an intervention called Your Own Enterprise. This involved engaging with a small group of local vulnerable young people, to enable them to develop enterprise skills and to form a social enterprise with the support of local business leaders. The ultimate objective of the intervention was to prevent or divert young people from involvement in serious and organised crime.

### AIMS

The aim of the evaluation was to provide a deeper analysis of whether, and how, vulnerable young people can be encouraged to develop enterprise skills and whether such newly gained skills can divert them from the criminal justice system. Additionally, it explored whether this intense intervention could lead to an increase in young people's self-esteem and wellbeing. A further aim was to explore multi-agency working and the views of stakeholders who work alongside the young people (e.g. social workers, youth offending and probation workers) as well as partner engagement workers (who will deliver the intervention) and local business partners (acting as mentors).

### METHODS

The mixed methods study took place over nine months between July 2017 and March 2018. Quantitative data provided by Your Own Enterprise gave an indication of any individual changes in the young people over the time-course of the intervention. Qualitative data were gathered from young people and other stakeholders through interviews and focus groups with a total of 65 respondents. Qualitative data from the interviews were analysed using thematic analysis aided by NVivo 11 software.

### FINDINGS

Major themes centre on the stakeholders' and the young people's differing understanding of the project as it was evolving. What was key in terms of engagement were the relationships formed between the young people and the project workers. The timescale of the project was also a significant factor in terms of impact and expectations.

### IMPACT

The findings were reported to the Home Office in April 2018 and formed part of a wider picture across the UK on projects engaging with young people on the edge of serious organised crime.

### PUBLICATIONS

A report was published in April 2018. Journal articles are also planned.

**"If (the project workers) weren't here I wouldn't have been trying, truthfully, missing the opportunity. I would be sitting probably in the park smoking drugs and that."**

Young participants in the project

**"We've only just got started, do you know what I mean? That's what it feels like to us."**

Young participants in the project

# TRIENNIAL REVIEW OF SERIOUS CASE REVIEWS

APR 2018 – MAR 2019

RESEARCH TEAM Prof Marian Brandon, Prof Jonathan Dickens, Dr Penny Sorensen and Dr Pippa Belderson (UEA), Dr Peter Sidebotham and Dr Joanna Garstang (Warwick University) with Dr Russell Wate and Research in Practice  
FUNDER Department for Education



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

While great strides have been made in safeguarding children and much good interagency work takes place across the country, at least 60 children die or are seriously harmed as a result of maltreatment each year (Sidebotham, Brandon et al. 2016). This will be the sixth consecutive national analysis of serious case reviews undertaken by the same team led by Marian Brandon from CRCF and the fourth review carried out in collaboration with Peter Sidebotham from Warwick University. This study builds on the framework of analysis developed for our previous triennial review of SCRs from 2011-14 the 'pathways to harm, pathways to protection' model. This allows us to critically explore opportunities for prevention and protection within the context of child and family characteristics, vulnerabilities and risks and the ways in which all of these interact with their environmental circumstances.

### AIMS AND METHODS

The current study of SCRs is in interlinked parts:

- 1 A mixed methods analysis of all SCR cases from 2014-2017 adding to our national database of more than 1,000 cases drawn from SCRs dating back to 2005.
- 2 Qualitative analysis of a sub-sample of up to 60 reviews sharing common themes (to be identified with DfE). We are using our previous coding framework and developing this further to focus on opportunities for prevention and protection on the part of practitioners, agencies, and the wider community.

- 3 An assessment of the implementation and impact on child protection practice of recommendations from SCRs, using a four staged approach, including a national survey, and phone interviews to assess the extent to which recommendations made in SCRs have been implemented and their impact on practice.
- 4 An investigation of the impact of recent policy initiatives, including the reforms to SCRs announced in Working Together 2013, and the new safeguarding partner arrangements from the Children and Social Work Act 2017. A template is being adapted to gauge SCR quality in a number of reviews drawn from the sample of 60 SCRs, with a focus on what leads to effective learning and recommendations. This sub study will work in parallel with and inform the recommendations work.

### IMPACT

We are again working with Research in Practice to co-produce accessible online resources including downloadable summaries of findings targeted for use by those in key practice roles and by different professional sectors. We also plan to work with BASPCAN again to disseminate findings to safeguarding professionals across the UK.

**We are again working with Research in Practice to co-produce accessible online resources including downloadable summaries of findings targeted for use by those in key practice roles and by different professional sectors.**





# ESTABLISHING OUTCOMES OF CARE PROCEEDINGS FOR CHILDREN BEFORE AND AFTER CARE PROCEEDINGS REFORM

SEP 2015 – JUL 2018

RESEARCH TEAM Prof Jonathan Dickens and Julie Young (UEA),  
Prof Judith Masson, Dr Ludivine Garside and Kay Bader (University of Bristol)  
FUNDER Economic and Social Research Council



## CONTEXT

Long-standing concerns about unnecessary delay in care proceedings led to major reforms in 2013-14, intended to reduce the duration of proceedings to 26 weeks. Prominent case judgments have also had a significant impact on social work and legal practice. This study builds on the UEA-Bristol team's earlier work on care proceedings to examine the outcomes for children and the impact of the recent reforms.

## AIMS

The aims of the study are to:

- Compare care proceedings and outcomes before and after the reforms of 2013-14.
- Examine how the new 'Public Law Outline' (which limits care proceedings to 26 weeks) is operating and what orders are being made.
- Identify outcomes of care proceedings for children in the pre- and post-reform samples, one year after the proceedings ended.
- Identify outcomes five years after the proceedings ended for children in the pre-reform sample.
- Evaluate the quality and usefulness of administrative data for tracking and evaluating outcomes for children.

## METHODS

The pre-reform sample is the children who were included in the team's earlier 'edge of care' study, and became subject to care proceedings in 2009-10 (170 cases with 290 children). The post-reform sample is drawn from proceedings taken in 2014-15 in the same six local authorities (five in England, one in Wales). This comprises 203 cases with 326 children, giving a total sample of over 600 children.

Data about the care proceedings on the post-reform sample were collected, allowing comparisons with the pre-reform sample. Relevant data from the national looked after children and child in need databases have also been obtained for the outcomes information.

A sub-sample of 118 children was selected, and detailed data about their progress and well-being after the proceedings were collected from local authority files. Interviews with 52 key professionals across the six areas were undertaken to get a picture of policy and practice issues.

## FINDINGS

A selection of findings from the data and analysis so far:

- There were very few differences between the two samples as a whole in terms of age, gender, ethnic origin, and the circumstances giving cause for concern. The proceedings in sample 2 were less likely to have been issued in response to a crisis than they had been earlier ( $S1 = 27.1\%$ ;  $S2 = 12.8\%$ ).
- The mean length of the cases in sample 2 was 26.6 weeks, just over the PLO time-frame. The shortest case lasted only six weeks, but the longest took 64 weeks.
- Overall, there were fewer care orders and placement orders, and more special guardianship and supervision orders. But there were considerable differences between the local authorities: for example, in one authority the proportion ending in care orders had more than doubled, whilst in another it had more than halved. This raises questions about justice and fairness between different areas.
- In terms of longer-term outcomes, the evidence is clear the local authorities do genuinely try to implement the court-agreed care plans. There were long periods of placement stability for most children in foster care (older children were more likely to experience placement instability). About a quarter of children subject to supervision orders returned to care within the follow-up period.

## IMPACT

The study is timely and important given the extent of the 2013-14 changes to care proceedings. Local authorities and courts both require knowledge of outcomes and understanding of practice to inform the plans and orders they make and approve.

## PUBLICATIONS

An interim report was published in *Family Law Week*, a free-to-access online resource, giving a detailed picture of the early findings:

Masson, J., Dickens, J., Bader, K., Garside, L. and Young, J. (2017) How is the PLO working? What is its impact on court process and outcome? *Family Law Week*, 17 February. Available at: [www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed176048](http://www.familylawweek.co.uk/site.aspx?i=ed176048)

**Local authorities and courts both require knowledge of outcomes and understanding of practice, to inform the plans and orders they make and approve.**



# UP AGAINST IT: FATHERS' EXPERIENCES OF RECURRENT CARE PROCEEDINGS

AUG 2017 – JUL 2019

RESEARCH TEAM Prof Marian Brandon, Dr Georgia Philip and Dr John Clifton (UEA), Prof Karen Broadhurst, Dr Yang Hu, Dr Stuart Bedston and Lindsay Youansamouth (Lancaster University)

FUNDER Nuffield Foundation



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

Although there has been substantial progress in understanding why some mothers return to the family court and lose successive children to public care and adoption, this has not been matched by a parallel programme of work on fathers. Fathers have legal party status in approximately 70% of s.31 proceedings each year, this is a sizeable population, about whom we know very little. This study aims to address this gap by building on two recently completed groundbreaking studies also funded by the Nuffield Foundation; firstly of fathers' experiences of child protection (Brandon, Philip and Clifton, 2017) and secondly: mothers in recurrent care proceedings (Broadhurst, Mason, Bedston et al 2017). This produces an exciting new collaboration between a team from the CRCF led by Marian Brandon and a team from Lancaster University, led by Karen Broadhurst.

### AIMS

The study aims to establish the scale and pattern of fathers' repeat appearances in s.31 proceedings, together with a clear picture of the rehabilitative challenges that fathers face and present.

### METHODS

The mixed methods research involves three key elements:

- 1 An analysis of aggregated patterns and trends of fathers in care proceedings in England, along with an analysis of the risk of recurrence. The source of data used for this analysis is the administrative records held by Cafcass.
- 2 A national survey of men involved in care proceedings.
- 3 A year long, in depth qualitative study of 30 fathers involved in recurrent care proceedings.

The study also involves developing a learning network of 22 participating local authorities, most of whom have already been recruited. The local authorities will work with the research team to administer the survey and support the recruitment of fathers into the in depth study and also provide important practice perspectives on rehabilitative opportunities for recurrent fathers.

The learning network includes:

- Two rounds of annual workshops (one in London and one in Lancaster) for up to 60 practitioners, managers, and other key stakeholders from the participating authorities to 'sense check' the ways in which emerging findings resonate with current services and practice in post-removal and/or pre-birth services for fathers.
- Each workshop will be used to hold focus groups (primarily with social workers and service managers and also possibly with legal representatives).
- We will work with participating authorities to develop an offer of one or more continuing professional development modules (CPD) for staff.
- Participating LAs will receive a user-friendly report at the end of the study.
- Annual seminars for up to 60 invited policy makers from the judiciary, government departments, and the voluntary sector will be held to discuss emerging findings and consider implications for policy and service development.

### IMPACT

Impact is built into the study design through the work of the two earlier studies, the evolving learning network as well as opportunities for continuing professional development activity (see impact section of this report). All our participating local authorities have said that improving work with fathers is a priority and involvement with the study will help to share good and improving practice with men and particularly recurrent fathers. We hope that this study will make a real difference by providing important new knowledge for both practice and policy.

**All our participating local authorities have said that improving work with fathers is a priority and involvement with the study will help to share good and improving practice with men and particularly recurrent fathers.**



# A SYSTEMATIC LITERATURE REVIEW: TRANS PARENTING THROUGH THE LIFE COURSE

JUL 2017 – JUL 2018

RESEARCH TEAM **Christine Cocker (UEA), Prof Trish Hafford-Letchfield (Middlesex University) and colleagues**

FUNDER **Middlesex University**



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

This project continues the interest in how lesbians, gay men, bisexuals, and those who are transgender are involved in parenting. For trans individuals, their needs are often incorporated into the rubric LGB studies, often without sufficient focus or wide enough samples. The term transgender is inherently problematic, as it encompasses a wide range of social groupings with different interests and needs. Notwithstanding, this is a challenging and sensitive area to research. In 2007, the Equality and Human Rights Commission wrote guidance for the public sector on how to be more inclusive of trans people (EHRC, 2007). The challenges for social work, health and social care are significant, particularly in relation to social inclusion of the trans population (Burns, 2005). Literature about trans parenting focuses on the transition process for young people and their own experiences of being parented, rather than exploring the experiences of trans people themselves as parents throughout their lives.

### AIMS

The exploratory aims of the project are to:

- Synthesise the knowledge and evidence on trans parenting, kinship and caring in a way that can begin to inform our understanding and practice when working with trans populations in professional practice.
- To identify key international stakeholders and research themes in relation to trans parenting, kinship and caring with a view to designing an empirical study that might attract external funding.

### METHODS

This project draws on secondary research and comprises two strands:

- 1 A systematic review based on a clear review protocol designed to answer the research questions on the theme of trans parenting, family kinship and care. The review will capture and synthesise the findings from a range of disciplinary knowledge and sources in response to the review questions.
- 2 Based on the findings, we will conduct a Delphi study with experts, including international experts identified through the review to enrich the findings beyond what is available from the published literature. The Delphi Study will identify key research questions for professional practice and enable us to facilitate links with key stakeholders and partners for future collaboration. Our definition of experts includes those with lived experience within the boundaries of the research as well as those who have researched or been involved in trans advocacy.

The project team includes two people with lived trans experiences from different age groups. They have been involved in the design of the review protocol; the discussion of themes from the review; the design of the Delphi online survey; the discussion of findings from the Delphi survey and the final report.

### FINDINGS

Findings from the project will be reported later in 2018 and will be presented at the second international Sexuality and Social Work conference in Montreal, Canada in August 2018.

### IMPACT

A final report of the project will be prepared in 2018, including practice implications for social work and other allied health professionals. Since one of the aims of this project is to influence practice, publications will target social work practitioner audiences. Further work will then be done to complete funding applications.

### REFERENCES

Burns, C. (2005), *A Basis for Evaluating Care Approaches and Services for Trans People*, Stockport:

Equality and Human Rights Commission (2007) *Gender Identity and Employment Monitoring: A Transsexual/Transgender/Intersex Perspective*, London: Home Office.









# FROM CARE, TO ADOPTION, TO PARENTING: A TWO GENERATION STUDY OF IDENTITY, RISK AND RESILIENCE IN ADOPTIVE FAMILIES

2018-2021

RESEARCH TEAM Prof Beth Neil and Dr Julia Rimmer (another researcher to be appointed)  
FUNDER Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

For 20 years UK policy has encouraged the adoption of children from care, and tens of thousands are now of an age where they could become a parent. This compulsory form of adoption is controversial at home and abroad and it is vital to fully research the lifespan effects – including what happens when adoptees become parents to the next generation. A child's birth is a key event in any family, bringing joys and challenges. The majority of children adopted from care will have experienced early adversities such as loss, abuse and neglect. Adoption offers permanence in a new family, but even so about half of adopted young people are likely to have psychological problems which carry on into adulthood. Studies of vulnerable parents (e.g. care leavers) show they are at risk of early parenthood, parenting difficulties, even their own children going into care. But for some, having a child is a positive choice and a healing experience. This study explores the positives and the challenges of becoming a parent from the perspective of people adopted from care.

### AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The overarching aims of the project are to provide a new understanding of the lived experiences and needs of people adopted from care who are now parents, and of adoptive parents who are now grandparents. These insights will be used to inform the support of adopted children and young people, adopted adults, and the children of adopted adults. This will then inform future developments in adoption policy and practice.

Objectives include:

- 1 To develop new insights into how children who were adopted from the care system experience, manage and make meaning of becoming a parent to their own (birth) child.
- 2 To understand how adoptive parents experience and manage becoming a grandparent and how they make meaning of this experience in the context of their life history and identity.
- 3 To gain a better understanding of how adoptees cope as parents and what resources they have used or need.
- 4 To review the relevant research and practice literature about (a) narrative identity and parenting (b) the transition to parenthood among late adolescents and young adults who may have experienced early adversity (c) grandparenting by those whose adult children may experience difficulties as parents.

### METHODS

The study will draw on narrative identity and risk and resilience frameworks in understanding the experiences of parents and grandparents. We will collect and analyse 80 in-depth interviews with adoptee parents and adoptive parents (now grandparents). Narrative and thematic analysis methods will be used to answer the research questions. The involvement of stakeholders (professionals, adoptees and adoptive parents) will inform the recruitment of participants, the data collection and analysis will help generate a sound understanding of practice and policy implications informing the future of adoption.

### IMPACT

Adoption from care is an extreme intervention in family life and a major focus of policy and investment in the UK. There is a moral responsibility to understand its impact across the lifespan; this project will generate insights about longer term outcomes. Wider social benefits will come through building understanding of a particularly complex and challenging family form with a mixture of biological, legal and relational ties. The study is highly relevant for academics interested in narrative identity, adoption, vulnerable parents, grand-parenting, and resilience.





# PATHWAYS AND OUTCOMES FOR CHILDREN IN NEED, AT RISK, IN CARE AND ADOPTED FROM CARE

**2015–2018**

**RESEARCH TEAM** Prof Beth Neil, Prof Gillian Schofield and Dr Lisanne Gitsels  
Other members of the ESRC business and local government data research centre will contribute their expertise, particularly in relation to methodology and data linkage  
**FUNDER** Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)



## CONTEXT

In 2013, the University of Essex, the University of East Anglia, the University of Kent and London School of Economics were awarded funding for five years to set up the ESRC Business and Local Government Data Research Centre. The overall aim of the Centre is to help local authorities and companies to harness the power of their data. One of the themes that was established as part of the bid was 'Supporting vulnerable people' and CRCF is leading the work under this theme. We will be undertaking a demonstration project using local government data from children's services to examine the pathways of vulnerable children.

Local authorities are required to collect and submit to the government a range of data about children in their care, and the headline figures from these data are published in aggregated form. This project aims to harness the potential of these datasets to answer a range of questions through analysing case level data, linking datasets, and undertaking longitudinal analysis. For example, nationally there are concerns about the numbers of children in care, and variations in these figures between local authorities. Some previous research has studied the pathways of children entering the care system, but the impact of local authority input with families before this threshold is reached needs more understanding: can early intervention divert families from more intensive services, and what is the best outcome for children? Where children do enter care and adoption becomes a permanency plan, again there much variation in the timescales of children's journey towards adoption, and there is potential to analyse in more detail how the individual characteristics of children determine the time taken to adoption.

## AIMS

To use the administrative data available from local authority children's services to gain some understanding of the pathways complete cohorts of children take through different levels of children's services interventions. This project also hopes to take advantage of the opportunities offered by data linkage, exploring the characteristics and outcomes for children across services. For example we hope to link the data about children in need and in care with information about these children within the education system. This linking of data will be important not just for the research, but for policy and practice.

## METHODS

We are working with a range of local authorities to analyse administrative data sets. Norfolk Children Services have shared Children in Need census data and the SSDA903 data on looked after children, and we are working with these to map the characteristics, pathways and outcomes for children in contact with children's social care. We are also working with the Yorkshire and Humberside Adoption Consortium to analyse the characteristics and outcomes of children adopted from care in the 15 local authorities within this consortium.

## FINDINGS

Findings from the project are anticipated later in 2018.

## IMPACT

This project has the potential to benefit participating local authorities by providing them with a detailed analysis of their service users and the impact of their interventions. This can inform future service planning and delivery, enhancing outcomes for children and families. The project will also benefit other local authorities through the demonstration of data analytics.

## PUBLICATIONS

Key findings from the research will be published in a range of formats addressing the key audiences (academic articles and policy/practitioner articles).

[www.blgdataresearch.org](http://www.blgdataresearch.org)



# THE YORKSHIRE AND HUMBERSIDE REGIONAL ADOPTION PROJECT RESEARCH

**MAY 2016 – MAY 2018**

**RESEARCH TEAM** Prof Beth Neil, Julie Young, Louise Hartley and Dr Marcello Morciano (Norwich Medical School), James Cornford (Norwich Business School), Lisa Holmes (Rees Centre), and various colleagues from the University of Loughborough  
**FUNDER** Barnardos



## CONTEXT

In response to the government's plans to regionalise adoption services, the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Adoption Project brought together a range of organisations involved in commissioning and delivering adoption services. As these changes took place, we conducted a survey of adoptive families in the region whilst James Cornford conducted action research to understand and support the process of organisational change.

## AIMS

The survey aimed to learn about the experiences of adoptive families, their challenges and the support services they need.

## METHODS

The survey was completed mainly online by 319 adoptive parents and focused on a 'target child' in the family. It included questions about the adoptive family and parents' early attitudes towards adoption, their child's pre-placement history, transition to adoption and characteristics and difficulties, birth family contact, and support services received and wanted. Child development/parenting measures (the Parenting Stress Index, the Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire, and the Brief Attachment Checklist) were included. Lisa Holmes and colleagues from the University of Loughborough helped to cost service use for families using their adoption cost calculator.

## FINDINGS

- A selection of findings from the analysis of survey data:
- Most parents (79%) said their adoption was 'going really well' or they were 'managing', but 21% of parents were experiencing many difficulties and were struggling. Standardised measures showed significant difficulties, (e.g. 44% of all children were scored as being in the 'High' and 'Very High' 'Total Difficulties' bands on the SDQ) increasing as the child aged.
  - Poorer outcomes for children were related to higher levels of maltreatment experienced prior to the adoption, spending more than 12 months in foster care, having more than one foster home, children being distressed on moving from foster care, exposure to drugs/alcohol in utero, and parent/s having a learning disability diagnosis.
  - Around a third of parents felt under prepared/informed about their child's history and future needs.

- Support services most frequently accessed were low level services, such as support groups, social events, online services, training classes, and support from educational staff. The experience of delay and inaccessibility was mentioned frequently in relation to psychological/therapeutic help (especially via CAMHS) and Adoption Support Fund applications. The most commonly cited service wanted but not received was life story work followed by therapeutic support.
- Schools were sometimes referred to as helpful and supportive but several parents expressed a strong need for staff training on attachment and the impact of early life experiences on children.
- The majority of families (81%) had experienced some form of birth family contact post adoption, mostly letterbox with parents. Contact with other adult birth relatives was rare. Parents tended to have mixed or negative feelings about this contact, sometimes struggling with unexplained failure of birth relatives to respond.

## IMPACT

The project has enhanced our understanding of the risk and resilience factors that impact adopted children's development and adoptive family's needs. The findings from this study are being used to inform the Yorkshire and Humberside Regional Adoption Project. The research was recently presented at a BAAF conference on adoption support in London. We will continue work with One Adoption helping evaluate their practice improvement fund funded project to improve adoption support assessments.


## PUBLICATIONS

Findings from the research are in the process of being disseminated and published in a range of formats addressing the key audiences (academic articles and policy/practitioner articles).

Adoption Project is bringing together a range of organisations involved in commissioning and delivering adoption services. We are carrying out a 3-strand programme of research as these changes take place involving:

- 1 A survey of adoptive families in the region.
- 2 An analysis of existing adoption-related data.
- 3 Action research to understand and support the process of organisational change.



A close-up, over-the-shoulder shot of a child's hand reaching out to touch a window. The window is covered in numerous small, glistening raindrops. In the background, a blurred cityscape with warm, golden-hour light is visible. The child's hand is in sharp focus, while the background is out of focus. The child is wearing a white sleeve with a black pattern.

**Each transition plan should have a clear focus on the emotional needs of the child, while at the same time supporting the foster carers and the prospective adopters.**



# MOVING TO ADOPTION: THE DEVELOPMENT AND PILOTING OF A PRACTICE PROGRAMME

SEP 2016 – AUG 2018

RESEARCH TEAM Prof Beth Neil, Dr Mary Beek and Prof Gillian Schofield

FUNDER Sir Halley Stewart Trust



## BACKGROUND

In the UK most adopted children are very young (under 5 years) when placed for adoption. They will often have lived in foster care for 18 months or longer before being matched with new parents. Typically, the move from foster to adoptive family takes place in 7–14 days, depending on the child's age. After the move, children may have little or no contact with their former foster carers. Although these moves can go well, in other cases these moves can be abrupt and distressing for children and for adopters and foster carers. Professionals are uncertain about how to plan and support these transitions in a more child focussed way.

## AIMS

This project aimed to develop a practice programme to support positive moves for children from the foster to the adoptive family.

## METHODS

A review of theory and research was carried out. In consultation with stakeholders the project team developed a practice programme. The programme is underpinned by the Secure Base model. The model suggests that secure base relationships in foster care can support the child to gradually build trust in the adopters and to establish secure base relationships in the adoptive family.

The practice programme is not prescriptive about how children's moves should be planned, but instead suggests an individualised approach to each move, with consideration given to five key principles:

- A positive relationship between the foster carer(s) and the adopter(s) is helpful to the child.
- The timescale for the move should meet the needs of the child.
- The child's trust in the adoptive parent(s) should be allowed to build gradually.
- The child's feelings should be held in mind and responded to.
- Some continuity of environment and relationships will support the child in building trust.

The programme has been piloted in two adoption agencies (about 45 cases) and practice development workshops have been held with key staff. Online feedback surveys are collecting data about each child's move from the perspectives of social workers, foster carers and adopters.

## FINDINGS

A number of issues have emerged, for example:

- How to work positively with foster carers and professionals using the five principles when there is a strongly held view that the traditional approach to children's moves to adoption is the most appropriate.
- How to ensure that the role of the social worker as the co-ordinator of the moving plan remains clear while at the same time empowering foster carers and adopters to work together to support the child.
- Uncertainty regarding the advice sometimes given to adoptive parents to restrict friends and family from visiting when the child has newly moved in.
- The continuity of foster carer visits after the move may not always be possible.
- The need for a range of approaches to help children to think about and process their feelings about their foster family after the move.

Further consultation with managers in the agencies and analysis of the online survey will ensure that the full range of benefits and challenges of the practice programme have been considered.

## CASE EXAMPLE

Fleur came into care at 10 days old and lived with her foster family until she was 18 months. The plan was adoption and she was matched with a family she had not met before. Her adoptive parents had one son and they lived at a distance from the foster family.

- Adoptive family visited the foster home each Saturday for 4 weeks, spending time in the home and the local community.
- Adoptive family (including the Grandmother) rented a house near the foster home for one week, and they gradually spent more time with Fleur, caring for her and building trust.
- Fleur travelled with her adoptive family back to their home.
- Foster family moved into local accommodation for 4 days so they can visit Fleur to help her settle.
- Foster family visit Fleur one week later then again after 1 month. Ongoing contact is planned.

## IMPACT

The project has been presented to a range of audiences in workshops and conferences in the UK, Europe and the USA. In July 2018, there was a workshop event for key stakeholders at which findings from the pilot sites were presented and next steps considered in terms of further development and dissemination of the practice programme. A final report will be prepared in August 2018, including practice implications for all parties, with other publications planned.

# EVALUATION OF DYADIC DEVELOPMENTAL PSYCHOTHERAPY/PRACTICE PROGRAMME (DDP): AN ADOPTION SUPPORT INTERVENTION

APR 2017 – MAR 2019

RESEARCH TEAM **Christine Cocker, Prof Beth Neil and Dr Penny Sorensen**  
FUNDER **Adoptionplus via DFE National Prospectus Grant**



## NEW RESEARCH

### CONTEXT

Adoptionplus is an adoption agency which offers an Adoption Placement Service, a Developmental Trauma and Attachment Therapy Service and a Training and Conference Service. Among other therapy services, Adoptionplus offers a new attachment focussed family therapy approach designed to meet the needs of children who have experienced trauma and loss, originally developed by Dan Hughes (Hughes 2011). Adoptionplus emphasises research based practice and is keen to evaluate its new work using DDP.

### AIMS

The aim of the research is to explore the impact on families of the DDP practice based therapeutic approach provided by social workers, in order to assess its potential to help families and to inform any future evaluation planning. The aspects of the new therapeutic social work service studied include:

- 1 Consultation with adopters and their social workers from the LA (six sessions with the possibility of further sessions if requested).
- 2 Therapeutic life story work (16 sessions).
- 3 Clinical work with adoptive families, including children. (Each family is offered 32 sessions).

### METHODS

The evaluation comprises three stages:

- 1 Parents and children/young people will be asked to complete a number of standardised measures before using either the consultation or clinical services, at the end of the service and 6 month follow up.
- 2 Telephone interviews with parents to gather more information about their experiences of using the services.
- 3 Telephone interviews with the social work staff involved in delivering the services, to enable staff views about the development of these services to be taken into account, and to explore the specific knowledge and skills that social workers have used in working with parents and children.

### FINDINGS

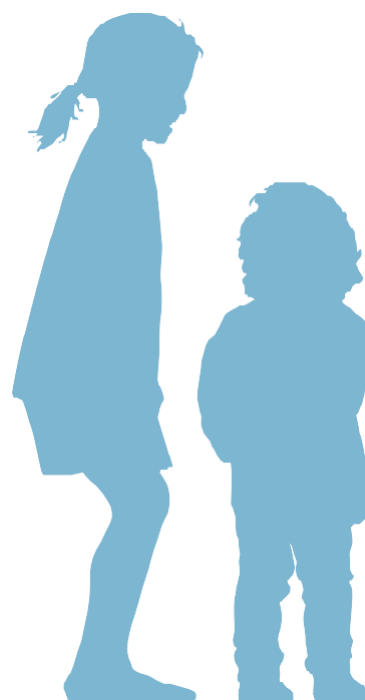
Findings from the project will be reported in 2019.

### IMPACT

A final report of the project will be prepared in 2019. A conference/study session will take place in conjunction with Adoptionplus to present the results of the evaluation.

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# PhD RESEARCH

**Congratulations to Dr Irina Sirbu and Dr Kate Blake-Holmes who completed their PhDs in 2018. Irina's thesis was Going home from residential care: an exploratory study of separation and re-integration experiences of young people and their mothers in Moldova. Kate's thesis was Growing up with a parent with a Mental illness: making sense of the experience through the reflection of adult offspring.**

## HOW DO SOCIAL WORKERS USE SUPERVISION TO MAKE SENSE OF THEIR WORK IN CHILD AND FAMILY SOCIAL WORK TEAMS?

**PhD STUDENT** Mark Gregory  
**SUPERVISORS** Dr Jeanette Cossar, Dr Laura Biggart

Decision-making in social work is difficult: the work is emotionally demanding and social workers regularly find themselves making judgements under pressure in anxiety-provoking situations. The opportunity to process the emotional labour of the work provides social workers with the headspace to think clearly, whilst time for reflection enables social workers to unpick the source of their intuitive judgements and to question their assumptions. This is part of the process of making sense of the work, an important step in the process of formulating reasoned judgements.

Supervision is a growing area of interest in social work research, with approximately half of the total empirical research output in the field having taken place in the last 10-15 years. Despite the increasing interest, still relatively little is known about how discussions between social workers and their supervisors influence the way that social workers make judgements about their cases.

My research will be taking a broad view of supervision, seeing it as a situated practice that takes place not just in formal one-to-one meetings but within everyday conversations in social work teams. I will therefore be taking an ethnographic approach to my study, combining observation of informal supervision conversations in the social work office with audio recordings of formal supervision sessions and semi-structured interviews. My approach will be psychosocially informed with a focus on the relational nature of supervision, the influence of social and organisational factors, and the internal emotional world of the participants. The sample will consist of three social work supervisors and nine social work practitioners working in teams undertaking a first assessment of children and their families.

This research will further our understanding of what happens within the supervisory dyad and discussions with colleagues that influences how social workers make judgements. It will also add to the growing literature on sense-making in social work by exploring the ways in which social workers process information and emotions in situ.

## HOMELESSNESS NOW: INSIDER ACCOUNTS FROM THE 'AGE OF AUSTERITY'

**PhD STUDENT** Christina Carmichael  
**SUPERVISORS** Prof Jonathan Dickens, Prof Gillian Schofield

The formation of the Coalition government in 2010 saw a series of shifts in relation to housing and welfare provision across England. Presented as a necessary outcome of economic crises, the austerity programme of the last seven years has included drastic cutbacks to local authority budgets and services, the removal of various welfare benefits, and a decrease in the availability of social housing. This has resulted in a dramatic increase in the numbers of individuals and families facing homelessness, with the official number of rough sleepers doubling since 2010 (Crisis, 2017).

This research project aims to further the understanding of how homelessness is being experienced and responded to in the 'age of austerity'. The study will entail a series of semi-structured interviews with (a) individuals experiencing homelessness, (b) frontline professionals working in relevant third sector organisations and, (c) frontline professionals working in relevant local authority teams. The choice of these three participant groups reflects the belief that the combination and comparison of these perspectives will provide a robust picture of homelessness 'on the ground', and represents the inclusion of perspectives that have often been overlooked by existing academic commentary. Data will be analysed using Kathy Charmaz' constructivist grounded theory framework. As well as adding to a limited body of academic publications on contemporary homelessness, it is hoped that the findings of this research study could inform current policy debates and assist front-line advocacy and local authority workers in better understanding the nature of this client group.



## EXPLORING DISABLED YOUNG PEOPLES' PERSPECTIVES OF CHILD PROTECTION

**PhD STUDENT** Jane Hernon

**SUPERVISORS** Prof Marian Brandon, Prof Gillian Schofield

Disabled children have the same rights to protection and to participate in decision making as all children (UNCRC, 1989, UNCRPD, 2006). Research shows disabled children to be at significantly greater risk of experiencing abuse and neglect than other groups of children. Identifying and responding to disabled children's needs should therefore be a particular priority in child protection practice. Yet recent evidence shows that they are less likely to be made the subject of child plans in England (DfE, 2011).

This PhD study aimed to improve our understanding of this issue by exploring disabled young people's own accounts of their experiences of participating in child protection decision-making in three English local authorities.

Thematic and narrative methods were combined to analyse data from in-depth qualitative interviews with 16 disabled young people, aged 11-17, and their parents or carers. All participants had experienced significant professional involvement relating to suspected abuse or neglect.

Many young people understood, and some agreed with professional concerns for their welfare. Young people perceived carers, and particularly practitioners, however, as often more concerned with their protection and impairment-related needs than facilitating their appropriate involvement in decision-making, or enabling them to make informed choices about matters that were important to them.

How young people made sense of and responded to their experiences varied. Some, despite feeling frustrated, struggled to express their views, and identified others' negative perceptions of their impairment and vulnerability as affecting their confidence to speak up. While others responded by attempting to defend their right to self-determination, usually resulting in conflict and a lack of engagement with professionals and services. A third group of young people had greater confidence expressing their views and in these being taken seriously in decision-making. These young people appreciated practitioners and carers who took time to understand and engage holistically with their interests and concerns, and responded in a way that made them feel valued as well as protected.

Disabled young people who have experienced or who are at risk of maltreatment represent an especially vulnerable group. In responding sensitively to their complex support needs professionals and carers need to ensure that young people's right to have their views valued and respected in decision-making is upheld alongside their right to protection and support with impairment related needs. Theoretical perspectives that promote a holistic approach to how disabled people make sense of their lives and impairments have much to contribute to improving practice in this area.



**PhD STUDENT** Peter Jordan **SUPERVISORS** Dr Neil Cooper and Prof Marian Brandon

## ETHICAL DECISION MAKING IN CHILD PROTECTION WORK

My research focuses on the ethical dimension of decision making in child protection work. I have specifically looked at the relationships between health visitors and social workers – a key dynamic in child protection with children under five. Amongst other factors, I am interested how ideas about 'doing the right thing' are framed within this relationship and how decisions are reached in a complex and challenging context. The research takes a discursive approach, examining the language and interactional practices that frame the decision making within this context. Making use of joint interviews with pairs of social workers and health visitors, the research hopes to add to the knowledge base that we currently hold about the ways in which professionals are able to make sense of the ethical dimension of their work. The research also challenges the idea that professions generate distinct and fixed value positions. I suggest instead, in line with Banks (2016) and others that professionals navigate ethical issues making use of principles and other ethical frameworks, but also responding to situational factors that emerge within the contexts that they work. Doing the right thing requires professionals to be constantly mindful of the ethical landscape that they occupy.



## THE IMPACT OF PERSONAL ASSISTANCE ON RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN DISABLED PARENTS AND THEIR CHILDREN

**PhD STUDENT** Nicola Jones

**SUPERVISORS** Prof Jonathan Dickens, Dr Yvonne Johnson

Growing numbers of disabled adults have active roles and responsibilities in raising children, however research suggests that they continue to experience significant disadvantage and a wide range of barriers to parenting (Great Britain. ODI 2008; WTWP 2009); they may also be disadvantaged when they seek support (Baum and Burns 2007). The existing literature reflects concerns about disabled parents' capacity to parent and reveals a presumption that their children may become 'young carers'. With the reform of adult social care services, new individualised services have developed. It has been suggested that personal assistance may be particularly suited to disabled parents (Olsen and Tiers 2004); it may also prevent children from becoming carers, however, no studies have explored the lived experience and ongoing impact of PA support in family life.

Qualitative methods are being used within this doctorate study to examine the relationships between disabled parents and their children, exploring the significance, influence and meaning of the PA role. 29 participants were recruited across three sample groups: disabled parents, children, and PAs. Views were gathered by means of semi-structured interviews; discussions with children were based around age-appropriate activities.

Thematic analysis is ongoing. Early findings highlight the complexity, intensity and fluidity of relationships within families using PA support, and reveal the dichotomies and tensions embedded within these. Data suggest that parenting with personal assistance can enhance a loving and stable home environment, enabling disabled people to express their parenting choices, and enriching the lives of their children. Many support relationships are positive and helpful; however, parents and children can worry about the long-term sustainability of these, and disruption to their lives when PAs leave their employment. Negative relationships can also develop; these have the potential to be disempowering and create a barrier to parenting.

Findings from this study will inform best practice, by providing the basis for open discussions about the meaning and management of personal assistance within families; this will better prepare parents, children and PAs for their encounters, leading to more positive and enduring support relationships.

## FEMALE OFFENDING AND CARE: AN INTERSECTIONAL ANALYSIS OF PATHWAYS AND PROFESSIONAL PERSPECTIVES

**PhD STUDENT** Donna-Maree Louise Humphery

**SUPERVISORS** Prof G. Schofield, Dr J. Cossar, Dr B. Larsson

In June 2015 an independent review was established by the Prison Reform Trust and chaired by Lord Laming in a bid to explore why British children who have been in care are over represented in the criminal justice system. Reports have found that girls with care histories are at risk of not only engaging in offending behaviour, but offending escalating in frequency and seriousness, often into violence (Criminal Justice Joint Inspection, 2014). In the UK girls with care histories also make up 61% of girls in custody, putting them more at risk of receiving custodial sentences than boys with care histories (Prison Reform Trust, 2014). Given that statistically there are more male offenders over all, this raises questions around what the relationship is between gender, care and offending behaviours. It also raises questions around how the system responds to these girls.

This research project aims to contribute to developing a deeper understanding of the relationship between gender, care and offending and the systemic response. In order to explore the professional response, interviews have been conducted with 20 Youth Offending Team workers regarding their work with young female offenders in care. Taking an intersectional focus, the project will examine pathways to violent offending and will explore how cultural ideals around gender, being in care and being an offender influence service intervention. It is hoped that findings will provide a complex understanding of the impact of gender on care and offending pathways and that this will help inform future policy and front line practice.





## GRANDPARENTS' EXPERIENCES OF BEING A SPECIAL GUARDIAN: AN INTERPRETATIVE PHENOMENOLOGICAL ANALYSIS

**PhD STUDENT** Paul McGrath  
**SUPERVISORS** Prof Beth Neil, Dr Laura Cook

The use of Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs) by the Family Court to formally secure the legal status of children living with family and friends, as well as with some foster carers, has increased significantly since their implementation in 2005, and grandparents are the largest cohort of special guardians. Local authorities are now regularly recommending SGOs at the end of care proceedings for children who cannot live with their parents. However these significant legal and policy decisions are based on a relatively small research base.

The current research base shows that special guardianships can often lead to positive outcomes for the child and carer; this is especially true when the special guardians have support from their wider family. However the research also demonstrates that there are challenges and complexities which are not well understood. Paul's study aims to support the development of the understanding of the lived experience of being a grandparent who is a special guardian. The study will examine areas such as: how special guardians decide to care for their grandchild; how special guardians experience the assessment and court processes; what impact becoming a special guardian has on family relationships; the day to day experiences of caring for the child, including managing contact with the child's parents and wider family; and their ongoing experiences of support from both statutory and non-statutory agencies.

Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) the study will analyse how special guardians make sense of the experiences described above. Paul has completed 18 interviews with 27 grandparents. Nine interviews were with single carers, nine were with couples. Nine of the interviews were with maternal grandparents and nine with paternal grandparents. The small sample size, although large for an IPA study, allows for an in-depth interpretation of the special guardians' sense making of their experiences.

It is envisaged that this study will help develop the understanding of what life is like as a grandparent who is a special guardian, the factors that influence the decisions they make, and the impact that various processes have on them. The study should be able to develop recommendations regarding how to best to intervene with, and support grandparents to provide permanent homes for children who need them.

## STAYING IN TOUCH: THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA BY YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

**PhD STUDENT** Andrew Sach  
**SUPERVISORS** Prof Beth Neil, Prof Jonathan Dickens

Andrew is a qualified social worker and lecturer in the school of social work. His PhD research explores social media use by young people in care. The use of social media (using smart phones and computers to communicate via applications such as Facebook, Twitter and WhatsApp) has grown at an exponential rate in the last few years, particularly amongst young people. The relatively recent emergence and growing popularity of social media mean we are just beginning to understand its impact on society and the development of children and adolescents. Research suggests social media is used by young people to explore themselves, their relationships and place in the world. Social media may be popular amongst young people, but there is a growing awareness of risks associated with its use, such as cyber bullying, sexting and grooming.

Young people in care represent some of the most vulnerable in society, and how this vulnerability influences (and is influenced by) their experience of social media is of interest. Disconnections in relationships with family and friends are also common – can social media help people maintain supportive networks, or might it mean that it is difficult to restrict birth family contact, even when such contact is unhelpful? These young people also find themselves in a situation whereby multiple adults, including social workers, foster carers and birth parents share responsibility for their welfare. How can young people be supported in managing the risks of social media, and what are the respective roles of these various adults who have parenting responsibilities for them in providing boundaries, support and guidance?

It is such questions that drove the development of this mixed methods project. The project took place within two local authorities in England. Data collection consisted of 5 focus groups (3 with social workers and 2 with foster carers), an online survey with young people in care aged 11 – 18, and 25 interviews with young people in care. The emerging findings suggest a challenge for social work practice appears to be found in how the young people, their carers and social workers come together to agree and determine the use of social media by young people in care.

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# OUR MEMBERS

**ANN ANKA** (BA, MA, PGCE, PhD) is a Lecturer in Social Work. Her research interest is in the involvement of people who use services in the assessments of students and working with those deemed as marginal or failing students.

**CHRIS BECKETT** (BSc, CQSW, MA, PhD) is an Associate Tutor in Social Work and has research interests in court proceedings concerning children, perceptions of risk, the use and abuse of language.

**MARY BEEK** (BA, CQSW, MA, PhD) is a Research Fellow. Her research and practice interests are in foster care and adoption and particularly in supporting children and their caregivers.

**PIPPA BELDERSON** (BA, MMedSci, PhD) is a Senior Research Associate in the Centre.

**LAURA BIGGART** (BSc, PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in Social Sciences Research and Psychology. Her research interests are in Emotional Intelligence, youth offending and work-life balance.

**MARIAN BRANDON** (BA, MA, CQSW, PhD) is Professor of Social Work and Director of the Centre. She is a children and families specialist and has research interests in family support, child protection and multi-agency working.

**JOHN CLIFTON** (MA, CQSW PhD) is a Senior Research Associate. His main research interest is in men and fathers in adoption and child protection.

**CHRISTINE COCKER** (BSW; MTh; OXON; PG Dip HSSM) is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work. Her research interests are lesbian and gay fostering and adoption and social work with looked after children.

**SARA CONNOLLY** (BA, MPhil, DPhil) is a Professor in Personnel Economics. Her research interests are in gender and the labour market.

**LAURA COOK** (BA, MA, MA, PhD) is a Lecturer in Social Work. Her research interests include the concept of professional judgement and the role of emotion in social work practice.

**NEIL COOPER** (BSc, PhD) is a Professor of Psychology with research interests in qualitative psychology, disciplinary boundaries, family relationships and technological change.

**JEANETTE COSSAR** (BA, MA, DipSW, PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work and has research interests in children and young people's perspectives on abuse and neglect and their experiences of child protection services; the experiences of LGBT young people in care.

**JONATHAN DICKENS** (BA, MA, CQSW, MSc, PhD) is Professor of Social Work, and Head of the School of Social Work. His research interests include child care law, care proceedings, planning and decision making for children in care and the character of social work in its wider social policy and international contexts.

**JANE DODSWORTH** (BA, MA, CQSW, PhD) is a Senior Lecturer in Social Work with particular research interests in child protection and child sexual exploitation.

**SIMON HAMMOND** (BA, MSc, PhD) is a Research Fellow in the Norwich Medical School. Simon works collaboratively with vulnerable populations using qualitative methods to research patients' and professionals' experience of health care. He is also interested in life narratives and the applications of digital life story work, including for young people in care.

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**DAVID HOWE** (BSc, MA, CQSW, PhD) is an Emeritus Professor of Social Work. His interests are in attachment theory, social work theory and practice, child abuse, neglect, rejection and trauma, and relationship-based practice.

**PETER JORDAN** (BSc, MA, DipSW) is a Lecturer in Child and Family Social Work. His research focuses on the relationships between key professionals engaged in child protection work, with a particular emphasis on the ethical stances taken.

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**BETH NEIL** (BSc, MA, DipSW, PhD) is a Professor of Social Work. She is interested in adoption and other permanent family placements, and in the pathways of children through the social care system. She has particular research interests in contact after adoption; birth families, post-adoption support; adoptive parent recruitment, linking and matching; and children's transitions from foster care to adoption.

**GEORGIA PHILIP** (MA, PGCE, PhD) is a Research Fellow in the Centre. Her research interests include: fathers, gender and care, qualitative and feminist research, the feminist ethics of care, parenting interventions and family policy.

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**JUDI WALSH** (BSc, PhD, C.Psychol., AFBPsS) is a Senior Lecturer in Psychology and has research interests in relationships and psychological well-being, particularly in the perinatal period.

**EMMA WARD** (BSc, PhD) is currently a Senior Research Associate in the Norwich Medical School.

**JULIE YOUNG** (BA, PGCE) is a Senior Research Associate in the Centre. Her interests are in child protection, care proceedings, the care system and adoption.





# OUR AIMS

To undertake research on a wide range of child and family issues across regional, national and international contexts.

To use research to advance our understanding of the development of children and the diverse nature and meanings of family life across the life course in a changing and multi-cultural society.

To advance our knowledge of the effectiveness and efficiency of services across the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

To work in collaboration with, or on behalf of, child and family agencies in the statutory, voluntary and private sectors.

To develop and disseminate research knowledge which will inform and have an impact on policy and practice, enhancing the well-being of children and families.



Centre for Research  
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