

ANNUAL REPORT
2019-2020

CSWIR

CENTRE FOR SOCIAL WORK INNOVATION AND RESEARCH



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Contents



Knowledge exchange	2
Rescheduled events for 2020-21	4
Research grants	5
Research impact	6
Selected publications by Centre members	7
Activities and achievements	8
Doctoral community	9
CSWIR people	10

Knowledge exchange

Despite the unavoidable disruptions during 2019-20 associated with the global pandemic, CSWIR has hosted some inspiring events, and CSWIR members have been productive in a range of activities - from successful research bidding and impact related work to the production of high quality research publications.

The Black Lives Matters campaign has thrown into sharp relief the crucial importance of CSWIR holding an unequivocal position that promotes diversity and equality in all of its activities. Following the Advisory Group convened in July 2020, Professor Gillian Ruch, CSWIR's Director and Dr Tam Cane, Lecturer in Social Work and CSWIR Advisory Group member, agreed to take responsibility for leading on CSWIR's response to these concerns. So watch this space!

Knowledge exchange activities

PRACTICE SUPERVISORS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

As part of the Practice Supervisors' Development Programme (PSDP), Jo Williams (PhD researcher and Delivery Lead for the PSDP), Dr Jeri Damman, and Professor Gillian Ruch co-authored two blogs published by Research in Practice, in response to the impact of the pandemic on professional practice:

- [Feeling, thinking, being: A call to mindfulness in times of crisis](#)
- [PSDP Themes and Models - Application to Practice in a Pandemic](#)

See blog, 'Sensuous supervisors: Understanding ourselves and others in the context of Black Lives Matter' written by Professor Gillian Ruch for the PSDP which makes a contribution to our thinking about and actions in response to the Black Lives Matter campaign.

RESEARCHING PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE FORUM

A new regular CSWIR forum - 'Researching Professional Practice' - was introduced this year. Designed to address a distinctive aspect of CSWIR's remit - the practice research interface - four forums have been convened: three face-to-face and one online. Together, doctoral researchers and colleagues from across the School and from practice have explored:

- How we differentiate between research and practice, and how terms such as practice research and research practitioners are understood and enacted
- Analytic approaches to research and their associations with practice
- Reciprocity in the research process
- The implications for research of a pandemic context.

PSYCHOSOCIAL RESEARCH METHODOLOGIES WORKSHOP 2020

Following the inaugural 'Psychosocial Research Methodologies Workshop' held in 2019 which explored carbon-lite research methods, this workshop unavoidably (and ironically) due to Covid was convened, wholesale, as a digital event.

With reference to the paper [Carbon-lite Collaboration: A Virtual Visual Matrix](#) which emerged out of the 2019 workshop, we explored, through an adapted and iterative version of the listening matrix (Cummins, 2018¹), our experiences as researchers in the context of a pandemic.

The workshop process invited participants to develop an incremental narrative to understand how pandemic experiences might collectively be represented and 'unthought knowns' (Bollas, 2002²) might be named.

1 Cummins, A. (2018): 'Prospects for the Listening Post as a psycho-social methodology', in (eds) A. Cummins and N. Williams, *Further Researching Beneath the Surface Volume 2: Psycho-Social Research Methods in Practice*, Abingdon: Routledge

2 Bollas, C. (2002) *Free Association*, Cambridge: Ikon Books

CSWIR SEMINAR

In October 2019, Dr Milena Heinsch from the University of Newcastle, Australia, presented the seminar 'Disclosure of suicidal thoughts during an e-mental health intervention: Relational ethics meets actor network theory'



PRACTICE RESEARCH

During this academic year, CSWIR has continued to work with the [South Coast Regional Centre for Social Work Education's \(SCRC\) Practice Research Hub](#). Several practice research projects are ongoing, and activities promoting research mindedness within Brighton and Hove and East Sussex have been well attended and received.

The Practice Research Hub is committed to providing ongoing support for practice research activities and projects despite the ending of the SCRC's funding period.

CSWIR looks forward to continuing to support these activities.

QUALITY CIRCLE

Professor Michelle Lefevre and Dr Jeri Damman have been working with child and family lawyers in the Quality Circle, Kent and Sussex FLBA, and East and West Sussex Resolution to develop a survey inquiring into the experience of lawyers working in private law children cases in relation to Practice Direction 12J, which had been introduced to guide courts, CAFCASS and practitioners in cases that involve domestic abuse and/or coercive control. The initiative resulted in the following publication:

Lefevre, M. and Damman, J. (2020): [Practice direction 12J: What is the experience of lawyers working in private law children cases?](#)

ME AND MY WORLD

Rebecca Watts, Teaching Fellow and lead practitioner for Brighton and Hove Children's Services, with the support of Professor Gillian Ruch, completed an internal evaluation of her innovative practice intervention - *Me and My World*.

The intervention was designed to respond to identified shortcomings in direct work and recording for children in care and comprised three main components:

- The promotion of continuous relationships for children in care
- An emphasis on convening relational and participatory statutory review meetings
- A recording system which supports social workers and IROs to write their reports directly to the child, and foster carers to write a letter to the child in their care every six months.

The evaluation has highlighted the transformative impact of adopting a child-centred approach to recording, which has proved to be beneficial both for children who have more accessible and meaningful accounts of their lives and for practitioners and carers who experienced this innovative initiative as a creative and energising process.

[See the full Evaluation Report.](#)



PRACTICE WORKSHOP

Professor Michelle Lefevre presented to a group of social work practitioners and managers in Lincoln in February on 'Promising approaches to address the criminal and sexual exploitation of young people'.

The event was supported by the Centre for Social Work Practice and the British Association of Social Workers. The practice recommendations were developed from two research studies, conducted with colleagues at Sussex.

Rescheduled events for 2020-21

A number of exciting cross research centre initiatives were thwarted by the pandemic disruption. Every effort will be made to run the following postponed events - circumstances permitting - in 2020-21:

CELERATING CHILDREN: A CALL TO ACTION

Plans are underway for a CSWIR-CIRCY co-hosted, interactive event to be delivered in 2020/21 in collaboration with Brighton Citizens UK, Brighton Sixth Form colleges and the first Children's Commissioner in England, Sir Al Aynsley-Green.

Celebrating Children's Lives
A 'call to action' event

Wednesday 13 May / 1.45-5.15pm
Conference Centre, Bramber House, University of Sussex

Hosted by the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) and the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY), in conjunction with the Sussex Student Union and Citizens UK, Brighton.

Keynote speaker:
Sir Al Aynsley Green,
the first Children's Commissioner for England (2005-09)

Sir Aynsley Green will set out a national overview of the state of children's lives in England in the 21st century, drawing on extensive international fieldwork captured in his book:
The British Betrayal of Childhood: Challenging Uncomfortable Truths and Bringing about Change

This event is the foundation for a 'a call to action' event hosted by the University and attended by young people from local sixth form colleges and youth organisations.

The young people will take part in action-focused activities along with students from the University of Sussex to identify and implement co-constructed and co-produced local events designed to enhance children and young people's wellbeing and promote their voices on, and views about, their own and other's lives.

For more information contact: Gillian Ruch,
Professor of Social Work & CSWIR Director: g.ruch@sussex.ac.uk

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TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN: PUTTING KITBAG TO WORK

A seminar, co-hosted with International Futures Forum, the organisation responsible for the creation of [Kitbag](#), will be re-scheduled in 2020-21 to explore the affordances of this bespoke resource that promotes the social wellbeing and emotional literacy of vulnerable children.

EXPLORING THOUGHTS AND FEELINGS ABOUT CLIMATE CHANGE

2020-21 will see the development of the feedback from a CSWIR/CIRCY/CIRA co-badged event to consider the psychological impact of climate change on our behaviours and responses to this life threatening phenomenon.

Research grants

INNOVATION IN SOCIAL CARE

Professor Michelle Lefevre, with colleagues from Sussex (Damman, Hickie, Maglajlic and Ruch) and the Universities of Bedfordshire and Oxfordshire, plus Research in Practice colleagues, was successful with a £1.9m bid to the ESRC to undertake research into innovation in social care. The four year innovative project, structured around three research strands – contextual safeguarding, trauma informed practice and transitional safeguarding – will explore how innovation in these practice arenas operates and enhances the effectiveness of practice with young people experiencing extra-familial risk and harm.



PRACTICE REVIEW OF 'PARTNERS IN PRACTICE'

Funding from the Department of Education's (DfE) Innovation Programme was awarded to **Dr Rea Maglajlic** and **Professor Gillian Ruch** to undertake a practice review of the impact of 'Partners in Practice' (PiPs). Sixteen local authorities have received PiP status and have received DfE monies to consolidate internal practice development and support sector improvement in other local authorities. Amongst the findings were the importance of stable and visionary leadership, and a well theorised understanding of new practice initiatives and their capabilities.

EVALUATION OF 'PARENTS AS PARTNERS'

Dr Jeri Damman and **Professor Gillian Ruch** are working on a Department of Work and Pensions funded evaluation of the 'Parents as Partners' programme delivered by Oasis, a gender-specific substance misuse charity based in Brighton & Hove and operating across East Sussex. The evidence-based specialist intervention delivered to both parents aims to reduce parental conflict, improve parenting skills, increase pro-social behaviour and improve families' social capital. The evaluation will be completed in Autumn 2020.

EVALUATION OF 'PARENT MENTORING PROGRAMME'

The 'What Works Centre for Children's Social Care' have awarded **Professor Gillian Ruch** and **Dr Jeri Damman** funds to undertake an evaluation of the Parent Mentoring Programme delivered as part of the work of the Family Drug and Alcohol Courts. The research, being conducted with two FDAC sites, has just begun and will report its findings in 2023.

INTERNATIONAL UNDERSTANDINGS OF SOCIAL WORK PEDAGOGY

With funding from the European Association of Social Work **Dr Hengliu Lisa Chen** has been working with international colleagues on social work pedagogy research. The group started in 2019 with colleagues in Sweden, Finland, Spain and Israel and in 2020 expanded to include colleagues from Canada, India and the USA. International colleagues interested in joining the group to research generic or gerontological social work pedagogy, are warmly invited to email h.l.chen@sussex.ac.uk.

Research impact

CONNECTED CARE: CO-CREATING CONNECTED AND INTELLIGENT CARE HOMES FOR PEOPLE WITH DEMENTIA

Dr Henglien Lisa Chen (PI) has been awarded ESRC Impact Acceleration funding for a multidisciplinary – Social Care, Health Care, Technologies and Business – project. The project is using qualitative participatory methods to enrich understanding about the current challenges and needs of care home staff, people with dementia and their families. For further information, check out the [project website](#) and [project blog](#).



RESILIENCE, HIV AND ADOPTION

In November 2019, **Dr Tam Cane** delivered the key note address 'Recognising resilience factors among people living with HIV seeking to adopt', at the Sexually Transmitted Diseases Research Scholars Conferences in Japan.

HIV AND DECISION-MAKING IN ADOPTION AND FOSTERING

In December 2019, **Dr Tam Cane** delivered HIV training workshops to Anchor Fostering. The workshop focused on addressing stigma around fostering children with HIV and decision making concerning HIV positive prospective foster carers and adopters.

ANTI-RACIST TRAINING WORKSHOP

An anti-racist training workshop was delivered by **Dr Tam Cane** and **Karen Okuefuna-Budd**, Practice Learning Co-ordinator, to practitioners in Brighton and Hove City Council.

TALKING AND LISTENING TO CHILDREN: PUTTING KITBAG TO WORK

Building on her ongoing research impact work in the field of social workers communication with children, **Professor Gillian Ruch** was successful in June 2020 with a bid for University Higher Education Impact Funds. The funds will finance the purchase of over 400 Kitbags, a resource designed to promote the social and emotional wellbeing and literacy of children, which will be distributed to social workers and foster carers in Brighton and Hove and Rotherham. The Kitbag recipients will be supported by the University of Sussex and the International Futures Forum (the Kitbag creator), to use it in their work with vulnerable children and young people.

[Check out latest information about Kitbag on the CSWIR website.](#)



Selected publications by Centre members

Clarke, R., Farina, N., **Chen, H.L.** and Rusted, J.M. (2020) '[Quality of life and wellbeing of carers of people with dementia: are there differences between working and non-working carers? Results from the IDEAL](#)', *Journal of Applied Gerontology*.

Wallengren-Lynch, M., **Chen, H.L.**, Muurinen, H., Segev, E., Hollertz, K., Bengtsson, A.R., Thomas, R. and Carrasco, M.B. (2020) '[Is there a shared social work signature pedagogy cross nationally? Using a case study methodology to explore signature pedagogy in England, Israel, Finland, Spain and Sweden](#)', *European Journal of Social Work*.

Damman, J.L., Johnson-Motoyama, M.J., Wells, S.J., & Harrington, K. (2020). 'Factors associated with the decision to investigate child protective services referrals: A systematic review'. *Child & Family Social Work*. DOI: 10.1111/cfs.12755

Lefevre, M., Hickie, K. and Luckock, B. (2019) 'Both/and' not 'either/or': reconciling rights to protection and participation in working with child sexual exploitation'. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 49 (7). pp. 1837-1855.

Havard, T.E. and **Lefevre, M.** (2020) '[Beyond the Power and Control Wheel: how abusive men manipulate mobile phone technologies to facilitate coercive control](#)', *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*.

Larkin, R. and **Lefevre, M.** (2020) '[Unaccompanied Young Females and Social Workers: Meaning-Making in the Practice Space](#)', *The British Journal of Social Work*.

Maglajlić, R.A. And Bašić, S. (2019) 'Critical Reflection on the social work experiences in Northern Ireland: Perspectives from Bosnia and Herzegovina', in. Duffy, J., Campbell, J. and Tosone, C. (eds.) *International Perspectives on Social Work and Political Conflict*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Wroe, L., Larkin, R. and **Maglajlic, R.A.** (eds.) (2019) 'Social Work with Refugees, Asylum Seekers and Migrants: Theory and skills for practice'. London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers.

Ruch, G., Winter, K., Morrison, F., Hadfield, M., Hallett, S. and Cree, V. (2019) '[From Communication to Co-operation: Re-conceptualising Social Workers' Engagement with Children in Child & Family Social Work](#)', Early Access

Hadfield, M., **Ruch, G.**, Winter, K., Cree, V. and Morrison, F. (2019) '[Social workers' reflexive understandings of their "everyday" communications with children](#)', *Child & Family Social Work*, Early Access.

Activities and achievements

Professor Elaine Sharland has been appointed as a Trustee of the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care.

Dr Rea Maglajlic, with her colleague Vassilios Ioakimidis from the University of Essex, has been appointed co-editor of the *British Journal of Social Work*.



Professor Michelle Lefevre, Dr Kristi Hickle and **Professor Gillian Ruch** were authors of papers in the British Journal of Social Work's '50 selected papers', an initiative to mark and celebrate the 50th birthday of the British Association of Social Workers.

Social Research Methods MSc students in the Department **Anna Hutchings** and **Amy Lynch** - and from Sept 2020 Social Work and Social Care doctoral SENs researchers - co-authored a feature for the second issue of the interdisciplinary doctoral research journal *Sentio* on the theme 'Ethics'. The feature, 'We need to talk about ethics: Using video methodology in child and family social work research' explores the emerging themes from the authors' reflections, and discussions with **Professors Gillian Ruch** and **Michelle Lefevre** about the ethical issues associated with adopting video methodology in social work research. [The journal will be published online in September 2020.](#)

Doctoral community

We are delighted to welcome new Masters and doctoral students as members of the Centre whose research interests intersect directly with the Centre's research and practice remit:

Amy Lynch
Developing understanding of empathy in child care social work practice
Supervisors: **Professor Gillian Ruch** and **Professor Michelle Lefevre**

Anna Hutchings
How do female social workers and adolescent males talk about and experience conversations about sexual behaviours, sexuality and sexual relationships in the context of possible harmful sexual behaviour concerns?
Supervisors: **Professor Michelle Lefevre** and **Dr Kristi Hickle**

Jo Williams
The psycho-social landscape of social work supervision: How practice supervisors create relational closeness and distance with supervisees in carrying out the functions of supervision
Supervisors: **Professor Gillian Ruch** and **Dr Jeri Damman**



CSWIR people

ADVISORY GROUP

Following a fallow year for the Advisory Group in 2018-19, the group has been reconstituted and revived with presentation from practice. The annual Advisory Group meeting took place in July and plans for the coming year were developed with a particular focus on exploring research and practice initiatives that have arisen directly as a result of the pandemic.

- **Dr Henglien Lisa Chen**, CSWIR Deputy Director
- **Dr Tam Cane**, Lecturer (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Janet Boddy** (Education)
- Principal Social Workers: **Phil Blurton** (Adults, ESCC) and **Richard Cattell** (Adults, BHCC), **Nicola McGeown** (Children, ESCC) and **Tom Stibbs** (Children, BHCC)
- **Paul Shuttleworth**, Doctoral Researcher & PGR representative
- **Professor Teppo Kroeger**, Professor of Social and Public Policy at the Department of Social Sciences and Philosophy, University of Jyväskylä. Teppo leads the [Centre of Excellence in Research on Ageing and Care](#) (CoE AgeCare) and co-ordinates the [Research Group on Care Policy](#) (CARPO).
- **Professor Jackie Cassell**, Brighton and Sussex Medical School
- **Professor David Weir**, Department of Informatics
- **DIGIT**, University of Sussex Business School (tbc)

As we move into 2020-21 we plan to expand the Advisory Group membership to include representatives from a local Experts by Experience group and a Private Voluntary Independent sector organisation.

RESEARCH ASSISTANT

In 2019, **Nathalie Huegler** was appointed as CSWIR's Research Fellow. However, her stay in post was short-lived as in October 2019 she was successfully appointed as Research Fellow to the Innovate Project, a large ESRC funded research project located within the Department of Social Work and Social Care.

SUSSEX MEMBERS

- **Dr Laia Becares** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Saul Becker** (Provost / Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Janet Boddy** (Education)
- **Professor Emerita Suzy Braye** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Rachel Burr** (Social Work and Social Care/ Education)
- **Dr Tam Cane** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Jackie Cassell** (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)
- **Dr Henglien Lisa Chen** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Jeri Damann** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Louise Gazeley** (Education)
- **Dr Kristine Hickle** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Robert James** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Feylyn Lewis** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Barry Luckock** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Tish Marrable** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr David Orr** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Gillian Ruch** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Elaine Sharland** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Rachel Thomson** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Professor Charles Watters** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Rebecca Watts** (Social Work and Social Care)
- **Dr Russell Whiting** (Social Work and Social Care)

LOCATION

The Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) is located within the Department of Social Work and Social Care in Essex House on the University of Sussex campus. The University is situated on a modern campus on the edge of the South Downs National Park near the lively seaside city of Brighton and Hove. London is one hour away by train, and there is easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

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