

CENTRE FOR INNOVATION AND RESEARCH IN CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH

ESW Open Seminar Series

Monday 29 October, 4.30-6pm
Room 106, Fulton Building

Pamela Cox

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Director, ESRC SeNSS DTP /
Chair, Social History Society

Adult Outcomes of Care in Britain: A historical view of ‘what worked’ and ‘what mattered’

The adult outcomes of children raised in care are a matter of much concern in Britain today. Care leavers account for a quarter of the adult prison population, a tenth of the young homeless population, and over two thirds of sex workers (Centre for Social Justice, 2015: 4).

A new book, *Young Criminal Lives: Life Courses and Life Chances from 1850* (by Barry Godfrey, Pamela Cox, Heather Shore and Zoe Alker and based on a Leverhulme-funded research project), argues that, by contrast, the first generation of boys and girls passing through the early care system were more likely to have experienced a modest improvement in their life chances.

In this seminar, Professor Cox will explore three key questions: First, what mechanisms shaped adult outcomes of care in the past? Second, did these vary by gender? Third, what might life course approaches to these issues gain from engaging both with historical- and gender-inflected analysis?

Drawing on wider analysis of the life courses and life chances of 400 adults who passed through the early youth justice and care systems as children in the northwest of England from the 1860s, Professor Cox’s ‘Young Criminal Lives’ is the first cradle-to-grave study of the experiences of some of the thousands of delinquent, difficult and destitute children passing through the early English juvenile reformatory and care systems. As such, it is one of the first British studies of adult outcomes of care to use long-run life course longitudinal data enabling the exploration of ‘what worked’ and ‘what mattered’ within past welfare systems.

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