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The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is a pan-university research centre at the University of Sussex. We are interdisciplinary and international in our scope, and our membership encompasses the social sciences, arts, humanities and professional fields including social work, law, education and health. Across diverse research – whether studying children’s imagined future lives in 1930s England, or young people’s experiences of labour migration in contemporary Burkina Faso – we share a common concern, with putting children’s perspectives and experiences at the centre of inquiry. Using innovative and imaginative approaches, our research and scholarship engages critically with children and young people’s lives in time and in place.

CIRCY was established in September 2012, and as we move towards our fifth anniversary year, it seems an apt time to reflect on achievements and future possibilities. After reviewing our work in 2015, we established a new research theme focused on methodological innovation, and this last year has seen growing international attention to our expertise in this area, highlighting the possibilities of imaginative methodologies for gaining insight into real world experiences that are complex and difficult to research. We have also continued to emphasise collaboration across our research themes, building links with other centres of expertise within and beyond the University, in the UK and internationally. Throughout this report, we ‘spotlight’ examples of the range of CIRCY’s research activity, including research projects, knowledge exchange activities, and doctoral research. When considered together, the multidisciplinary perspectives offered by these projects enrich our understanding of childhood and youth as a field of research and practice.

Within our ever-growing University membership, CIRCY continues its mission to provide a fun and inspiring ‘space to think with’ for the academic community – capacity building, opening up new possibilities, and supporting the work of colleagues at all career stages from doctoral research onwards. We have an active social media presence, including a Twitter feed and blog. We also have new podcasts on our website highlighting methodological innovation. The taught courses affiliated with CIRCY – the BA in Childhood and Youth: Theory and Practice and the MA in Childhood and Youth Studies – continue to flourish, and we are delighted to see our graduates thriving across a range of academic and professional roles with children, young people and families.

Looking forward to 2017-18, we have decided to use our fifth anniversary celebrations to think about ‘children and the future’. This discourse of futurity has been a commonplace trope in popular culture, advertising and policy discourse. It is a sentiment that not only glosses over the complicated and diverse lives of children, but arguably secures a particular kind of future that excludes many. Interdisciplinary childhood studies has done much to reveal how the figure of the child is used within modern public discourse, tackling notions of ‘being’ and ‘becoming’. But children are the future in a much more prosaic way: they will be the tax payers whose contributions pay for our pensions, they will face the consequences of a 2°C rise in global temperature, and the automation of much of what we now consider ‘labour’. And there will be children in the future, though perhaps falling birth rates and new reproductive technologies will contribute to very different cultures of childhood. Throughout our fifth anniversary year, we will engage with these complexities in a series of seminars which will juxtapose disciplinary perspectives from CIRCY and further afield, and which are designed to think through the possibilities and challenges of researching childhood and youth now and in the future. To inspire us in this work, we have invited children and young people to share their pictures of the future with us. Their images – which range from political figures to space age innovations – are featured throughout this report.

Cover image: Sonny and Luke
‘However tough or bright the future seems, we will face what comes with gusto, enthusiasm and we will never run for cover!’

Contents page image: Lyra: ‘I want to have nice picnics when I’m bigger.’
Amy: "Our future in space. There is too much rubbish on earth! We need to recycle more."
Our research themes were revised following a review in 2015. They are designed to inform and inspire our work – not to set boundaries between studies. Some projects fall clearly within a single theme, but many have links across themes. Here we set out the core themes for CIRCY’s work, whilst giving a flavour of the variety of projects undertaken within them that characterise our approach. The Research Spotlights provide more detailed examples of our work.

‘GOOD CHILDHOODS’ AND ‘(EXTRA) ORDINARY CHILDREN’

This, our broadest theme, explores the conceptualisation of childhood and youth across space and time. Research within this theme considers diverse and contingent meanings of childhood, as well as ways in which global processes cut across these in the expression of powerful ideas of what a ‘good childhood’ or an ‘ordinary childhood’ should or could be. This work also considers categories of children and young people whose circumstances are ‘extraordinary’, placing them outside of normative ideals – for example, young migrants, child labourers and care leavers – and considers ways in which those categorisations can neglect the ‘ordinary’ aspects of ‘extraordinary’ lives, practices and relationships.

Understandings of ‘good’ or ‘ordinary’ childhoods are situated in time, and this is eloquently demonstrated by research conducted by CIRCY researchers from the Department of History at Sussex. Lucy Robinson and Laura Cofield secured funding from Santander for a research trip to the Riot Grrrl Archives in the Fales Library in New York, leading to an article addressing ‘the pleasures and faultlines of a DIY subculture that self-consciously intervened in the relationship between feminism and fandom’. And, researching a very different time, Hester Barron and Claire Langhamer have published two articles analysing essays written by schoolchildren in 1937, which were collected by the social research organisation Mass Observation. The two articles – ‘Children, Class and the Search for Security: Writing the Future in 1930s Britain’ and ‘Feeling through Practice: Subjectivity and Emotion in Children’s Writing’ – explore children’s own perceptions of the world around them, from the ways they navigated different emotional spaces, to the ways in which they visualised their future lives. In January, Hester Barron and Claudia Siebrecht also celebrated the launch of a major new edited book published by Palgrave Macmillan, Parenting and the State in Britain and Europe, c. 1870–1950: Raising the Nation. The book was launched at the conference ‘Seen But Not Heard? The Spatial, Emotional and Material Sites of Childhood and Youth from Antiquity to Modernity’, held at Sussex in January 2017, and jointly hosted by CHASE (the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South-East England), Mass Observation, and CIRCY.

Recently published research conducted by Anne-Meike Fechter (Anthropology) in Cambodia is highlighted as a Research Spotlight in this report. This innovative ethnographic study focused on experiences of privileged migration, specifically children whose parents work for aid agencies in low-income countries, and considered how mobility shapes the way they understand and negotiate experiences of privilege.

In Education, Janet Boddy’s recently completed study, Environment in the Lives of Children and Families: Perspectives from India and the UK was also concerned with understanding childhood across contexts. Part of the ESRC National Centre for Research Methods funded NOVELLA Node (Narratives of Varied Everyday Lives and Linked Approaches), the research was conducted in conjunction with CIRCY Advisory Group members Ann Phoenix (UCL Institute of Education, UK) and Uma Vennam (SPMW University, Tirupati, India), and with Catherine Walker (now University of Leicester) who carried out a PhD linked to the project. Involving families living in urban and rural contexts in southern India (Andhra Pradesh/Telangana) and England, the study used a multi-method narrative approach (for example, combining photography, mapping and walking interviews). A book about the findings will be published (open access) by Policy Press Shorts in September 2017.
CIRCY’s work on (extra)ordinary childhoods continues to attend to the experiences of children, young people and families in the UK and internationally who are involved with child welfare services, including children and young people who have experience of being ‘in care’ (out of home placements) and those at risk of child sexual exploitation. This body of work includes service evaluations as well as formative research. Recent examples include a cross-national review examining the use of voluntary placement arrangements for children conducted by Janet Boddy (Education) for Family Rights Group, and an evaluation by Louise Gazeley and Tamsin Hinton-Smith (Education) of the Higher Education Champions Coaching Programme pilot project, in conjunction with AimHigher South East. The AimHigher research highlighted the potential value of ‘bespoke, personalised and flexible support’ from care experienced coaches in supporting young people to overcome systemic barriers to accessing higher education.

Work with families – understanding children’s lives within families and supporting parents and families – is an important strand of CIRCY’s work within this theme. Kristine Hickle (Social Work) received funding from the charitable organisation Safer London to evaluate the Empower Families programme which provides case work and support to parents and carers when their child is at risk of, or experiencing, child sexual exploitation. Michelle Lefevre (Social Work) has been funded to evaluate a project working with parents who have lost one or more child to care following neglect. Her research will explore how successful the project was at addressing participants’ parenting difficulties, reducing unplanned pregnancies, and preventing similar removals to care of participants’ future children.

Following a series of successful evaluations for Wave 1 of the UK Department for Education’s Innovation Programme, CIRCY researchers have been appointed to evaluate projects within Wave 2 of this major funding initiative in children’s social care. Led by Gillian Ruch (Social Work) and Janet Boddy (Education), CIRCY researchers will work in collaboration with Research in Practice (www.rip.org.uk), a key non-governmental organisation, evaluating projects which aim to improve children’s social care systems.

CIRCY researchers have been using the concept of ‘publics’ as a springboard to think about childhood, youth and social change with reference to technological innovations, socio-economic developments and practices of activism broadly defined. Research within this theme is concerned with childhood and social change in the real world; it allows a focus on children and young people’s lived experiences and on the multiple and overlapping configurations of social change and the relationship between the two. Furthermore, it enables us to ask questions about how childhood publics might be created, what social issues might mobilise children, young people and families, and which institutions might support or hinder the creation of new publics.

Nuno Ferreira (Law) conducts research with a particular focus on children’s rights; his research with young people who train with elite football academies is highlighted in this report as a Research Spotlight. Also in Law, Maria Moscati’s EU-funded research on mediation for children of same-sex couples has led to the publication of Rainbow After The Storm, a short illustrated book for children, explaining the role of the mediator in disputes involving their parents.

Work continues on the European Research Council funded Connectors study, led by Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work) with Christos Varvantakis, Vinarasans Aruldoss, Robyn Long (all Social Work) and supported by Claire Prater (Education and Social Work). Connectors is a cross-national study focusing on children aged 6-11 years in three cities (Athens, Hyderabad and London). It explores the relationship between childhood and public life, and how an orientation towards social action emerges in childhood. The team have been busy disseminating their work, including editing a special issue of Contemporary Social Science on Political Activism across the Lifecourse, building from a successful workshop held last year.

1 See http://sro.sussex.ac.uk/64093/1/MOSCATI_CHILDREN_FAMILIES_MEDIATION.pdf
EMOTIONAL LIVES

Research within the theme of Emotional Lives takes account of historical and cultural contingencies, as well as an awareness of the ways in which emotion expresses and confirms the materiality, relationality and sensuality of social lives. Projects are also concerned with practice and policy approaches that are emotionally engaged with, and seek to build insight into, emotional dynamics and development among young people and those working with and for them. As a whole, research within the theme seeks to understand established and taken-for-granted issues through the lens of emotion and affective practice, considering, for example, how emotional lives underpin our behaviour and practices.

A key feature of our research on children’s emotional lives has been developing work by Robin Banerjee (Psychology) and colleagues on kindness. Robin coordinated the inaugural Kindness UK Symposium in November 2016 at the Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts on the Sussex campus, which brought together PhD researchers from across the university who were awarded conference grants to present research illuminating kindness and its impact on people and communities. Robin’s work on children and young people’s emotional wellbeing also continues with funding for a PhD Scholarship from Mental Health Research UK for a project concerned with school experiences and trajectories of mental health and social disability.

DIGITAL CHILDHOODS

Research within the Digital Childhoods theme links closely with the Sussex Humanities Lab, a major university investment (www.sussex.ac.uk/shl). Research in this theme examines the many dimensions of digital childhood and youth, including the ways that technology impacts on parenting and play and how the ‘context collapse’ associated with the digital complicates the contours of ‘family-scapes’. It also looks at personal and professional boundaries in work with children and young people, confounding age and generation-based hierarchies. We recognise young people as entrepreneurs of digital landscapes, contributing to debates on data sharing, ownership and access, as well as curators of archives and memories.

A key focus for Digital Childhoods over the last year has been the development of a landmark edited book, to be published by Bloomsbury Academic next year. Researching Everyday Childhoods in a Digital Age: Time, Technology and Documentation is edited by CIRCY researchers Rachel Thomson (Social Work), Sara Bragg (CIRCY Advisory Group) and Liam Berriman (Social Work/Sussex Humanities Lab). It is informed by two cutting-edge CIRCY studies, funded by ESRC and AHRC – ‘Face 2 Face’ and ‘Curating Childhoods’ – and will link to a set of dynamic multi-media resources generated by the studies.
CIRCY researchers Rachel Thomson (Social Work) and Ben Fincham (Sociology), have also been funded by ESRC, through the University of Sussex Social Science Impact Fund to conduct an important new project in conjunction with Brook, developing digital learning tools in relation to Sexual consent and sexual pleasure. This work builds directly on the findings of two co-funded CIRCY/Brook doctoral research projects undertaken by Ester McGeeney (former CIRCY research assistant now based at Brook) and Elsie Whittington (current CIRCY research assistant). The award enables the research team to co-create and deliver two online digital learning modules: one on sexual consent and one on pleasure. These are both areas of high demand from educators who lack confidence and materials to address the needs of young people. The project is designed to work with and extend an established model, securing new organisational learning about the reception and efficacy of digital learning. Laura Hamzic, head of digital and communications at Brook, is a co-applicant for the project and will oversee the production process. Ester McGeeney will lead on the design of the content of the modules and document their reception. The project began in January 2017 with a view to the materials being available for schools by the start of the 2017/18 school year.
In the summer of 2016, CIRCY received Higher Education Impact Funds (HEIF) from the University of Sussex to record a series of podcasts (www.sussex.ac.uk/esw/circy/communicate) to showcase work in the School of Education and Social Work which highlights the value of methodological innovation in addressing ‘difficult-to-research’ issues of real-world importance:

- **Rachel Thomson** (Social Work), Co-Director of the Sussex Humanities Lab, discusses methodological innovations for understanding children’s mediated lives in contemporary society.

- **Janet Boddy** (Education) talks about use of creative methods, including music and photography, in a cross-national study working with young adults who have been in care, funded by the Research Council of Norway and carried out in partnership with NOVA in Oslo and SFI in Copenhagen.

- **Michelle Lefevre** (Social Work) describes a project which spans the CIRCY research themes (Extra)ordinary Childhoods and Emotional Lives using conversation analysis of real-life video interactions during social workers’ home visits with children and families.

- **Jacqui Shepherd** (Education) discusses the use of creative and participatory methods in her ESRC-funded doctoral research to understand the experiences over time of young people with autism making the transition from special school to mainstream further education provision in England.

- **Sevasti-Melissa Nolas** (Social Work) talks about the use of comparative ethnography to explore the relationship between childhood and public life in three international cities (Athens, Hyderabad and London) for the ERC-funded Connectors study.

Extending the innovative methods developed during her doctoral research, **Jacqui Shepherd** (Education) has completed the exploratory project ‘It Feels Weird and Funny’ concerned with autistic children’s experiences of the dentist. Funded by the University of Sussex Research Opportunities Fund, the project was conducted in collaboration with Jennifer Parry of the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust. **Rebecca Webb** (Education) has also been working on a new exploratory project, in collaboration with a state nursery/daycare centre. She is working in partnership with practitioners to devise methodology for thinking ‘in slower time’ (in the words of the centre head) about early childhood practice. We look forward to reporting on this project in more detail as work progresses.
SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH: CHILDREN IN THE WORLD OF FOOTBALL

Research on children in the world of football (footballtalentuk.wordpress.com) is being conducted by Nuno Ferreira (Law), in collaboration with Anna Verges at the University of Manchester. The study offers critical perspectives on regulation and rights of the child élite athlete, focusing on the largely unregulated industry that is professional football. Since the early 1990s, a large amount of research has explored the distinct group of child élite players. While scholars have raised the risks of early specialisation (in physical, social and psychological terms) for child development, counter arguments highlighting the benefits of training and an emphasis on long-term athlete development have mitigated those critical voices.

The ‘Children in the World of Football’ project focuses on the child élite footballer as a category of its own, exploring a number of potentially highly problematic issues around the practice and organisation of youth development in professional football, including:

- scouting networks operating as recruiting agencies, relying on the acquiescence of uninformed parents and unrealistic dreams of professional status
- in an adultified sport environment, competition replaces play and youth development equates to asset development
- registration systems that limit – or effectively forbid – the mobility of children between clubs
- compensation systems that amount to commodification and trading in élite child players
- over-specialisation in the sport at the expense of identities other than sport
- demotion of academic pursuits or alternative careers
- de-selection without consequences.

To gain new insights into these critical issues, the research team carried out 76 interviews with a range of stakeholders involved with UK Premier League football academies (child footballers, current adult footballers, adult ex-footballers, parents, ‘house (host) parents’, football academies staff, NGOs staff, experts, academics and journalists) between October 2013 and December 2015.

Preliminary findings indicate that critical voices exist, yet appear to focus on discrete improvements and tweaks in the margins – such as improving educational provision in clubs, enhancing alternative career development, resourcing better child welfare, and making de-selection processes more humane. Deeper systemic issues in the organisation of professional youth football remain unchallenged, including the ability of professional clubs to recruit from nine years of age, the limitation to free movement of child players, the unlimited number of players a club can register and retain, and the lack of scrutiny by independent bodies of educational provision. A final report will advocate for far-reaching solutions to these issues.

You can keep up-to-date with the project’s progress on www.facebook.com/footballtalentuk and twitter.com/Footbtalent. For more information, contact Nuno Ferreira (n.ferreira@sussex.ac.uk).
Anne-Meike Fechter (Anthropology) has been researching the experiences of children of mobile professionals employed by international aid agencies in Cambodia. Children and young people can be affected by mobility in different ways: migrating with their families, moving independently, or as children ‘left behind’. How their mobility affects their life chances and choices is often dependent on their level of relative privilege: their socio-economic status, legal status, national and ethnic identity, among other factors. In the context of young people whose parents consider themselves ‘mobile professionals’, and who often attend international schools during their time abroad, a considerable amount of literature has concerned itself with the question in what ways this experience of mobility might make them more ‘international minded’. This is understood as being open to the world, to new experiences, as well as being able to ‘feel at home anywhere’.

Using ethnographic methods, the study considered how – if at all – having aid worker parents might matter for young people’s outlook on life. The research examined young people’s understanding of their own relative privilege and that of their Cambodian peers at international school, combined with witnessing poverty around them – poverty which, after all, was the reason their parents had come to work in Cambodia in the first place. Anne-Meike found that one of the convictions of young people was, indeed, that their international mobility uniquely equipped them with what they called ‘open-mindedness’ – a mantra also relayed in classroom activities and reflected in extra-curricular activities. Perhaps ironically, though, some students found that their ‘open-mindedness’ also provided grounds for a sense of superiority, specifically towards their peers at home. In exploring the students’ everyday lives, it also emerged that the open-mindedness ostensibly cultivated at school had to be tempered when it came to negotiating social relationships.

The research reveals the complexity of the relationship between mobility and open-mindedness, so often espoused by international schools and parents, and echoed in some of the academic literature. First, it is worth being mindful of how a branded form of ‘open-mindedness’ can become the cornerstone of an identity predicated on an exclusive form of mobility, and therefore possibly defeating its object. It may also necessitate social ‘bracketing’, that is, limiting the critical political awareness on which, to some extent, it prides itself. In this sense, these young people’s mobility may not in itself enable a critical engagement with poverty, or with their own and others’ privilege.


For more information, contact Anne-Meike Fechter (a.fechter@sussex.ac.uk).
CIRCY’s work is fundamentally concerned with building ‘real world’ understandings of children’s lives in time and place. We aim to think beyond the academy, making our research visible and accessible, and engaging with research users – including researched groups – throughout the research process and beyond the lifetime of specific projects. In this section, we highlight some examples of the range of work we do with knowledge exchange, public engagement and partnership. That includes ‘traditional’ academic activities, such as dissemination and expert advisory work, as well as activities that create opportunities for mutual learning between researchers and others who have a stake in the research process and outcomes (whether as practitioners, policy makers, other academics, or children, young people and families).

**Talking Childhood: Seen but Not Heard?**

CIRCY was delighted to support a major conference at the University of Sussex in January 2017. *Seen But Not Heard: The Spatial, Emotional and Material Sites of Childhood and Youth From Antiquity to Modernity* was hosted in conjunction with Mass Observation and with support from the Consortium for the Humanities and the Arts South East (CHASE), bringing together scholars with interest in childhood and youth from across disciplines, from the early modern period up to the present, and from a range of geographical locations. Keynotes were delivered by CIRCY’s [Hester Barron](#), [Claire Langhamer](#) and [Lucy Robinson](#) (all History), drawing on materials and conclusions from Hester and Claire’s latest article on Mass-Observation’s children’s essays, and Lucy’s forthcoming book on the relationship between popular culture and politics in the 1980s. You can read more about the event in a great blog on the CIRCY Wordpress site by History doctoral researcher Owen Emmerson: [circyatsussex.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/seen-but-not-heard/](circyatsussex.wordpress.com/2017/02/16/seen-but-not-heard/)

**Fun, Play and Creativity**

Our interest in creative approaches to work with children and young people spans several research themes, including methodological innovation and substantive projects concerned with the importance of fun and creativity in young people’s lives.

*Bergerac’s Island: Jersey in the 1980s* is a major exhibition at Jersey Museum, St Helier from 2017–18. [Lucy Robinson](#) (History) is Historical Adviser to the exhibition, which includes a whole section on play and games in the 1980s, and a rebuilt night club with a light-up floor and display on space and club cultures. Lucy was also MC and interviewer – alongside Viv Albertine of The Slits (a British band formed in 1976) – talking about women and musical inspiration at the Odditorium Brighton Festival, May, 2017.
In December 2016, Robin Banerjee (Psychology) and Fidelma Hanrahan (Psychology/Education) hosted a major event at the University of Sussex Attenborough Centre for Creative Arts, at which they shared learning from their Beating the Odds project (highlighted in the 2016 CIRCY Annual Report) and celebrated the value of young people’s participation in the creative arts. The event included performances by the Glyndebourne Youth Opera and Brighton Dome workshop group, Miss Represented.

The value of fun and creative approaches was also a key feature of a CIRCY workshop, hosted by Elsie Whittington and Janet Boddy, at the Sussex Community Festival in June 2017. Approximately 3,000 people visited the Festival. CIRCY’s ‘Picture the Future’ workshop – where young people produced images of the future through drawing, Lego and/ or playdough (shown throughout this report) was a popular destination for all ages.

**TALKING DIGITAL CHILDHOODS**

As part of ChaTLab (The Children and Technology Lab), Nicola Yuill (Psychology) participated in the Brighton Science Festival (11-25 February), which saw nearly 300 visitors to ‘Live Sentences’ demos: Can we make learning grammar fun? ChaTLab also hosted Team Domenica, a café in Brighton run by young adults with learning difficulties, who presented their views about their work. Nicola also presented ChaTLab work on sharing digital books in a five minute ‘Literacy Slam’ event at the UK Literacy Association/ BERA Digital Literacies in Education Research Symposium in May, work which is featured in a Knowledge Exchange Spotlight in this report.

**INTERNATIONAL LINKS**

Over the last year, CIRCY researchers have continued to extend their international links, sharing experiences of researching children and young people’s lives. As detailed in the Talking About Our Work section, we have been discussing learning from our research all over the world. Elaine Sharland (Social Work) has been appointed as an Honorary Professor of Social Work at the University of Hong Kong. Janet Boddy (Education) visited Helsinki to serve on the peer review panel for the Research Council of Finland’s Key Project Panel on Education and Psychology. She also spent a week in Brussels, continuing her work as an expert ethics advisor for the European Research Council Ethics Assessment team.

Louise Gazeley and Janet Boddy (both Education) visited University West in Sweden to give invited presentations on their research and to discuss building links between CIRCY and the newly established Centre for Child and Youth Studies at University West. Janet also spent a week at the University of Chile in Santiago working with Professor Claudia Capella and her team, advising on narrative analysis in a study of psychotherapy with young people who have experienced sexual abuse. Claudia then visited CIRCY in July 2017, continuing to build this new collaboration.
A key feature of our work over the last year has been our growing reputation as a leading centre for methodological innovation in childhood and youth research. Highlights are as follows:

**Jacqui Shepherd** (Education) delivered a workshop on case studies in research with autism at the University College Copenhagen International Week in March 2017, working with 40 undergraduates from over 10 different countries. Also focused on the case study, CIRCY joined with the Sussex Humanities Lab and the Mass Observation Archive in October 2016 to host the two-day advanced training workshop Case Histories in Qualitative Longitudinal Research, funded by ESRC National Centre for Research Methods. Speakers included Pam Thurschwell (English), Rachel Thomson (Social Work) and international visitors Julie McLeod (University of Melbourne), Jette Kofoed (Århus University) and Jeanette Østergaard (SFI Denmark). Following the success of this workshop, Rachel led equivalent events for researchers in Denmark and Australia. The Danish event was hosted in collaboration with Jeanette Østergaard at the Danish National Centre for Social Research (SFI), and included a presentation by Elaine Sharland (Social Work) on her work developing narrative accounts from longitudinal panel data. In February, Rachel visited the School of Social and Political Sciences at the University of Melbourne where she worked with Julie McLeod, Sign Ravn and an interdisciplinary group of scholars (including historians, anthropologists, geographers, sociologists and social policy scholars), to discuss the ‘case’. Rachel also spoke about her methodological work at the University of New South Wales, where she became an advisor and consultant on ‘Stories of resources and resourcefulness’, an Australian Research Council funded project led by Jen Skattebol.

Building on the links established during Jette’s visit to CIRCY/SHL in autumn 2016, **Janet Boddy** (Education) and Jette have secured further ESRC NCRM funding for a one-day advanced training workshop in September 2017 on *Thinking with Ethics: In and Beyond the Field*. The workshop will focus on ethics in the space in which research is practised, going beyond the moments of ethics regulation and review to consider how ethical dilemmas feature at all stages of the research process.

You can book a place on the workshop through the National Centre for Research Methods: [www.ncrm.ac.uk/training/show.php?article=7236](http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/training/show.php?article=7236)

**Rachel Thomson** (Social Work) was invited by the Academy of Social Sciences to contribute to a panel discussion on ‘Interdisciplinarity: Challenges and opportunities for Social Sciences’ in October 2017. She also visited Australia in spring 2017, where she gave keynotes and invited papers on case studies in interdisciplinary qualitative research at the University of Melbourne and University of New South Wales.

**Janet Boddy** (Education) – along with three postgraduate researchers from CIRCY and the Centre for International Education (CIE), Nehaal Bajwa, Anna Wharton and Gunjan Wadhwa – visited the University of Siegen to take part in their first International Student Week. Janet gave a half-day workshop with Daniela Reimer from the University of Siegen and Hélène Join-Lambert from the University of Paris West, Nanterre (formerly a Maire Curie Research Fellow in CIRCY) on ‘Space to Tell a Different Story: Methodological and ethical considerations in research with ‘vulnerable’ populations’ Nehaal, Gunjan and Anna took part in a variety of workshops, presenting their research and sharing information about the CIRCY and CIE research centres.

![Image](https://example.com/hospital.png)

Olena: ‘A hospital of the future’
POLICY AND PRACTICE CONNECTIONS

CIRCY researchers have been working with policy-makers, service providers and practitioners in international, national and local contexts to build on the expertise embedded within our Centre and external advisory group to incorporate research user engagement across the lifespan of our projects, as the following examples show.

Building on his research on children’s emotional lives and wellbeing, Robin Banerjee (Psychology) presented his research on Improving Mental Health provision in Secondary Schools – Evaluation of a Pilot in three Secondary Schools 2015-2016 to the Children and Young People Committee of Brighton and Hove City Council in November 2016. Robin also launched a programme of action research on wellbeing in Pembrokeshire schools with a headline presentation to the Head Teachers’ Meeting in March, giving keynotes to professional audiences - including the EmpathyLab meeting for schools in London and the Principal Educational Psychologists’ Annual Conference.

Dorte Thorsen (Global Studies) talked about child labour at an event in Chatham House in July 2017, an area of her work that has also drawn significant media attention (see CIRCY in the News below). Dorte has also been working with NGOs, companies and policy advisors in relation to her research on youth migration and labour, including delivering a workshop organised by the International Finance Corporation (IFC) to companies sourcing agricultural commodities, and a global webinar on ‘migration to the city from youth’s perspective’ for Save the Children. She has also co-organised a workshop on Gender, Youth, Migration and Development in London in July 2017, working in conjunction with Kate Hawkins (Migrating Out Of Poverty) and advisors from Save the Children, Care International and Christian Aid.

Nicola Yuill and the Digital Bubbles team (Psychology) ran their seventh seminar on Autism and Technology with stakeholders across academia, charitable groups, and professionals. Materials from the seminar can be viewed and downloaded at: http://digitalbubbles.org.uk/?page_id=30

CIRCY researchers have been sharing learning from Piloting and Evaluating the See Me, Hear Me Framework, a project funded by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner and conducted in conjunction with the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (www.sussex.ac.uk/socialwork/cswir). The evaluation explored how three local authorities had implemented a new child-centred framework for addressing child sexual exploitation and was conducted by Barry Luckock, Kristine Hickle, Michelle Lefevre and Gillian Ruch (all Social Work). In September 2016, Barry and Kristine presented the final report of the See Me Hear Me project to a meeting chaired by the Children’s Commissioner for England and attended by representatives from Ofsted and the Department for Education. Michelle Lefevre and Kristi Hickie ran a symposium in London in May 2017, in conjunction with senior local authority managers involved in the project, for key representatives of Local Safeguarding Children’s Boards, discussing Challenges and Strategies for Developing Service Responses to Child Sexual Exploitation.
Kristine Hickle (Social Work) has also been presenting her work on trauma, working with practitioners – including social workers and the police. She spoke at Brighton and Hove’s annual conference for social workers, at a workshop entitled Working with Traumatised Parents, and presented her work on ‘trauma-informed policing’ at the Annual Devon and Cornwall Public Protection Conference in March 2017. She also presented ‘A victim’s journey’ on the experts’ panel at the Child Sexual Exploitation and Policing Knowledge Hub Conference. Drawing on his research within the Digital Childhoods theme – and a study of young people’s ‘digital romance’ – Liam Berriman (Social Work) took part in an invited workshop in May 2017 at the National Crime Agency, jointly hosted by CEOP (the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) and Brook. Gillian Ruch (Social Work) gave a Masterclass to Gloucester County Council Children’s Services in January 2017, entitled ‘Who do you think you are? Discovering and developing reflective and relationship-based practice in Children’s Services.’

Janet Boddy (Education) was an invited speaker at the Family Rights Group/Your Family Your Voice Challenge Event for the Knowledge Inquiry into Section 20 Voluntary Arrangements under the Children Act 1989, in April 2017. She spoke about her Nuffield Foundation ‘Beyond Contact’ study, as well as sharing emerging insights from an ongoing scoping review commissioned by Family Rights Group to inform the Inquiry. The audience included local authority lawyers and social workers, independent and NGO law professionals (eg. barristers), parents and NGO advocacy professionals. Also in April, Janet took part in the All Party Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers in the House of Commons, where she ‘took part in discussions about the professionalization of residential care work. More recently, she has been invited by the Government’s Department for Education to contribute to the ongoing National Fostering Stocktake, led by governmental advisors, Martin Narey and Mark Owers.

CIRCY researchers continue to make important contributions to responding to calls for evidence in government consultations. Nuno Ferreira (Law) worked with colleagues in the School of Law, Politics and Sociology to contribute to the UK Parliamentary Inquiry on Brexit and Human Rights, writing the section of the response on children’s rights. See:


Nuno also contributed to a Parliamentary Inquiry on Employment Opportunities for Young People, focusing on child labour and the duty to privilege educational opportunities: http://data.parliament.uk/writtenevidence/committeeevidence.svc/evidencedocument/work-and-pensions-committee/employment-opportunities-for-young-people/written/37821.pdf

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

A particular highlight of the year has been Tracey Fuller’s (Education) CPCAB (Counselling & Psychotherapy Central Awarding Body) Counselling Research Award, made in association with the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) for research with important implications for counselling training or counselling practice. By highlighting significant research, documenting it on video and disseminating it online, the award aims to make research accessible and engaging to counselling trainees and practitioners.

Tracey Fuller
CIRCY IN THE NEWS

Several CIRCY researchers are part of an international network concerned with children and work, and in December 2016, Dorte Thorsen (Global Studies) and Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work) both spoke to the media about this work. On 18 December 2016, Dorte was quoted in a Guardian article on child labour, challenging the International Labour Organisation’s (ILO) arguments for a total ban on child labour. The following day, she was interviewed on the same issue by Newsday for the BBC World Service. Melissa was subsequently interviewed for a news bulletin feature on child labour by BBC World TV.

On a less serious note, Janet Boddy (Education) was interviewed on BBC Radio Sussex Breakfast News about CIRCY’s ‘Picture the Future’ project which invited young people to send us their images of what the future might look like. Lucy Robinson (History) spoke on Radio 4’s Making History feature about One Direction as today’s Dunkirk spirit. Nicola Yuill’s (Psychology) research on shared reading and digital books – highlighted in a Knowledge Exchange Spotlight – has also attracted media attention with her blog in The Conversation picked up in stories on ITV Meridian, the Telegraph, the Sun and The Psychologist magazine.

CIRCY ONLINE

The CIRCY blog continues to be active, highlighting our research and activities. See https://circyatsussex.wordpress.com/

Specific projects also have their own blogs and social media activity, including Everyday Childhoods (http://blogs.sussex.ac.uk/everydaychildhoods/) and Connectors (https://connectorsstudy.wordpress.com/). Lucy Robinson (History) also blogs about her research (https://profrobinson.com/), and CIRCY Advisory Panel member, David Buckingham blogs regularly on issues relating to children, media and education: www.davidbuckingham.net

In November 2016, Gillian Ruch (Social Work) and colleagues launched the website for the ESRC-funded Talking and Listening to Children research project, incorporating its professional development materials for social work practitioners: www.talkingandlisteningtochildren.co.uk

Rosa: ‘The village – there are going to be flying animals in the future and some things from the past will come back.’

Jacob: ‘The power of our imagination.’
Jacob and Samuel: 'Fisbeere flat fish lives under water and can go on land. And jumps off cliffs and glides into water or onto land.'
Nicola Yuill in the Children and Technology Lab (ChaTLab) (Psychology), has been studying how parents and children share books at home, investigating the difference that reading on screen makes and how digital books might be designed differently. Nicola has already written on how technology might be designed in ways that either support or inhibit sharing, and this project looked especially at the sense of togetherness that sharing stories can bring. The theoretical perspective of embodied cognition, emerging from the popular reading group she runs, got Nicola thinking about how the physical properties and cultural meanings of technology might alter subtle properties of interaction. Her lab specialises in the close analysis of videotaped interaction to understand more about our interactions with and through digital technology.

The project began after some consultancy work with Egmont Publishing. Nicola and her colleague Alex Martin videotaped 24 mothers and their seven to nine year-old children reading popular fiction together on paper and on a tablet. The physical medium did not affect how children recalled the story. However, ‘interaction warmth’ was lower for screen than for paper, and continued to drop over time, particularly when the child rather than the mother was the reader. Children also showed higher story engagement with paper than screen. There was also evidence that mothers made more story-relevant comments whilst reading paper books. Additionally, the team found evidence that usage was linked to different positioning for mother and child; on the whole, child readers held and used tablets in ways more typical of individual use, leaving mothers to ‘shoulder-surf’ the screen. Conversely, mothers read paper books in ways that supported shared visual attention, enabling the child to adopt a range of ‘curled-up’ postures.

Nicola is currently aiming to work with researchers in the U.S. to adapt existing digital book technology to support closer shared interactions in the home. As Nicola points out, seven to nine years is the age when children’s book reading drops and screen use increases sharply, so it is a good time to encourage children to stay tuned in to shared enjoyment of texts.

The research is documented in an open access article:

See also Nicola’s blog for the Conversation: https://theconversation.com/reading-with-your-children-proper-books-vs-tablets-63221

For more information about the project, contact Nicola Yuill (nicolay@sussex.ac.uk)
Sp0tlight on Research:
The Trust is the Work: A Phrynetic Case Study of School Counsellors

Tracey Fuller (Education) is conducting ESRC-funded doctoral research exploring multiple viewpoints on school counsellor information-sharing because of safeguarding concerns, examining how to maintain trust and working alliances when sharing young people’s information. The study grew out of Tracey’s previous professional experiences of working therapeutically with young people, and was based at the ‘Place2Be’ – the largest school counselling charity in the UK.

The research design and analytic approach was influenced by Flyvbjerg’s (2002) re-working of Aristotle’s concept of phronesis – ‘practical wisdom’ – associated with reflexive and contextual knowledge. Within the research, school counsellors, school safeguarding officers and young people with counselling experience were envisioned as contextual experts who possess the wisdom to take forward professional practice in this area. In an iterative process, these groups constituted a ‘polyphony of voices’ who exchanged insights about how to maintain trust in working alliances during the challenge of child protection information sharing. Semi-structured interviews were undertaken with counsellors and teachers who reflected on a fictional information-sharing vignette. A video was then created using actors to speak the professional’s words as an accessible method for young people to stimulate their contribution to the research. Groups of young people were given an opportunity to respond to the vignette and the video of the adults’ views. Professional participants later met as a group to co-reflect on the meaning of the data. This interweaving of perspectives from professionals and young people across the research process highlights the value of integrating data collection and knowledge exchange, attending to the expertise of all those who encounter school counselling.

Emerging findings indicate that continued counsellor availability is essential for maintaining trust through information sharing; this includes maintaining empathy, attending to the young person’s concerns, and talking to them in depth about why they may be at risk and how they should expect to be treated. A strong feature of an ‘available’ counsellor was their perceived trustworthiness, and young people also emphasized their need to set the agenda in counselling sessions following disclosures. Fear and anxiety can accompany information sharing for young people and practitioners alike. The negative emotions involved in safeguarding processes can mean that school counsellors can themselves become pre-occupied by anxiety about following correct protocol and ‘getting it right’. This is heightened if counsellors feel unsupported, or have a poor professional relationship with their school safeguarding officer. Tracey’s study concluded that trust in therapeutic alliances with young people during information sharing should be supported by participatory practices that help them feel involved, working against the feeling that things are being taken out of their hands. This depends on sufficient containment experiences to support school counsellors, as well as young people.

For more information, contact Tracey Fuller (t.fuller@sussex.ac.uk)
What is five times five? 20

Typical classroom

Draw a planet.

Most people live on Mars.

Population areas.
Seminars and events

CIRCY hosts exciting and inclusive events throughout the year, including workshops, seminars and conferences. This year, we were delighted to highlight events hosted in conjunction with other research centres across the University, in addition to solely CIRCY-hosted events:

5 OCTOBER 2016
Juggling pace, affectivity and ephemerality in digital youth lives, Jette Kofoed, Associate Professor, School of Education, Aarhus University, Denmark.
Hosted by: Sussex Humanities Lab and CIRCY

17 OCTOBER 2016
Depravation vs. Support: Poverty research from a mother/daughter perspective, Professor Orly Benjamin, Department of Sociology & Anthropology, Bar-Ilan University, Ramat Gan, Israel.
Hosted by: CIRCY

17 NOVEMBER 2016
Jointly hosted by: CIRCY/centre for International Education (CIE)/Centre for Cultures of Reproduction, Technology and Health (CORTH)

10 JANUARY 2017
Stuck Places in Analysis: a doctoral training workshop, Jette Kofoed, Associate Professor, Danish School of Education Århus University, Denmark.
Hosted by: Sussex Humanities Lab and CIRCY

6 FEBRUARY 2017
Fun and Childhood, Dr Benjamin Fincham, Senior Lecturer in Sociology, University of Sussex, UK.
Hosted by: CIRCY

27 FEBRUARY 2017
Giving birth to oneself: giving birth to one another, Luce Irigaray
Hosted by: the Department of Philosophy, with support from CIRCY, CORTH and Sussex Centre for Cultural Studies (SCCS)

27 MARCH 2017
Families and food in austerity Britain: Early findings from a mixed methods study of families and food in hard times, Dr Rebecca O’Connell, Thomas Coram Research Unit, Institute of Education, University College London, UK.
Hosted by: CIRCY

12 APRIL 2017
Bogans and chavs: the stigmatisation of poverty in Australia and the UK, Dr Deb Warr, Research Fellow, McCaughy VicHealth, Community Wellbeing Unit, Melbourne School of Population and Global Health, University of Melbourne, Australia.
Hosted by: CIRCY

24 MAY 2017
Rights and welfare perspectives of children’s training in football academies, Professor Nuno Ferreira, Professor of Law, Sussex Law School, School of Law, Politics and Sociology, University of Sussex, UK.
Hosted by: CIRCY
29 JUNE 2017

Intensities and Contingencies: Friendships between women as an auxiliary intimacy, Maree Martinussen, University of Auckland.

Hosted by: Department of Sociology/CIRCY

3 JULY 2017

Research in psychotherapy for sexual abuse: Including the voice of children, adolescents, parents and therapists, Professor Claudia Capella, Department of Psychology, University of Chile, Chile.

Hosted by: CIRCY

5 JUNE 2017

Researching in the Context of Poverty: a doctoral training workshop, Professor Tess Ridge, Professor of Social Policy & Deputy Head of Department of Social & Policy Sciences, University of Bath, UK.

Hosted by: CIRCY

Taking the Time to Listen: Developing QLR studies that make space and time for the needs and concerns of low income children and parents to be heard, Professor Tess Ridge, Professor of Social Policy & Deputy Head of Department of Social & Policy Sciences, University of Bath, UK.

Hosted by: CIRCY
Over the years since CIRCY was established, we have built a thriving community of doctoral researchers whose work spans research themes and draws on innovative methodologies. Support for our expanding doctoral community has been a key priority over the last year. In September we launched a doctoral writing group within which postgraduate researchers from all disciplines and stages of doctoral work can explore and develop their ‘writing voices’. The group has been administered and supported by staff from the Department of Education, with Rebecca Webb, Tamsin Hinton-Smith and Emily Danvers facilitating. Membership is open to doctoral researchers beyond CIRCY and the School of Education and Social Work. A highly successful endeavour, the Writing Into Meaning Group is described in more detail in a Spotlight feature.

Louise Sims (Social Work) spent five weeks as an invited visitor at the University of Århus (Copenhagen campus), working with Jette Kofoed’s research group, and supported by funding from the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) and the University of Århus. She worked with an international and interdisciplinary group of researchers who have particular expertise in the analysis of affectively rich data with interests in both psychosocial analysis and writing methodologies.

2016–17 has seen new doctoral researchers join CIRCY, among them Nehaal Bajwa (Education) who is researching fatherhood in Pakistan, and Sushri Sangita Puhan (Social Work) who is researching adoption in India. We are delighted to welcome them to our doctoral community. Within the School of Education and Social Work, six CIRCY researchers presented their work as part of the Research-in-Progress Seminar series:

- Elsie Whittington (Social Work): Educating for Consent: Beyond the binary
- Tasleem Rana (Social Work): Youth Mentoring with Vulnerable Young People: Exploring the difference between theory and practice
- Nehaal Bajwa (Education): Narratives and Practices of Fathering and Early Childhood Care Among Urban Men in Pakistan
- Jenny Hewitt (Social Work): UK Young Adults’ Experiences of Civic and Political Engagement in Everyday Lives
- Tracey Fuller (Education): The Trust is The Work: Exploring how school counsellors maintain alliances with young people when sharing information because of safeguarding concerns. A Phronetic Case Study (see Knowledge Exchange spotlight)
- Fawzia Mazanderani (Education): Navigating the ‘New South Africa’: An ethnographic study of the ‘born free’ generation in Mpumalanga

We have also seen a number of our postgraduate researchers complete their doctoral studies, including Keith Perera (Education), Gemma North (Social Work) and Helen Evans (Social Work). We extend particular congratulations to them. In this report, there are Spotlight features on two doctoral researchers approaching the end of their studies: Helen Drew (Psychology) and Elsie Whittington (Social Work). In September 2017, Elsie Whittington will complete her three years as CIRCY’s Graduate Teaching and Research Assistant (GTRA). Elsie has been an inspiring colleague and a truly formative influence on CIRCY during our crucial early years as a research centre. This is a good opportunity to express our heartfelt gratitude for all her wisdom and her work.
WE ARE THE AUTHORS OF THE FUTURE

THE MYSTERY OF TUT

BY

CELARA & ALIX

MYSTERY

ALO
WRITING INTO MEANING: SUPPORTING DOCTORAL RESEARCH

The ‘Writing Into Meaning’ group was convened this year to enable doctoral and early career researchers to explore and develop their academic writing in a conducive and collective environment. Sponsored and supported by CIRCY, the aim of the group is to unite researchers who can, all too easily, feel isolated and uncertain.

Tamsin Hinton-Smith, Rebecca Webb and Emily Darvers (all Education) lead the group with the support of Elsie Whittington (Social Work). It ran initially as a ‘pilot’ project during autumn and winter 2016/17 to gauge interest levels, with a view to its longer term viability and adaptability. The group’s four principle aims are to:

• provide a supportive and conducive writing environment for doctoral researchers (predominantly but not exclusively) at the ‘writing up’ stage of their thesis
• introduce and teach writing ‘techniques’ and ideas that might enable a wider reflexive engagement with both writing oneself into text and imagining ‘the reader’
• produce written output (including for peer-reviewed research journals) that can be reflexively engaged with – and critiqued – by the group
• enable a peer-support writing culture independent of guided taught sessions.

Sessions alternate between facilitated meetings, coming together to write and discuss aspects of writing as a whole group, and encouraging researchers to meet independently. The group included doctoral and early career researchers from Education and Social Work, Psychology, English, Sociology, Law and Global Studies, enriching discussions through interdisciplinarity. Topics covered to date have included: ‘What of ‘me’ do I bring to my writing?’; Boundaries, contexts and paradigms; ‘Mastery’ over writing; Imaginings and ‘dismissals’ of possible audiences; The blocks and bumps we come up against as we write and how/who and/or what enables us to live and traverse these.

The group sought out and shared ways of capturing writing for different purposes and audiences, speaking to the final thesis text and beyond and sharing practical ‘tips’ for getting published and writing for academic journals and online forums. Each week, facilitated sessions embrace ideas of ‘free writing’ opening up possibilities for emergent texts.

The group blogs about its work (https://writingintomeaning.wordpress.com) and was shortlisted for the final round of the University of Sussex ‘Teaching Awards for Excellence’.

I have written 12,000 words on my findings chapters during the time that the group has been running. It feels like it has loosened my writing shackles so that I feel freer to just write.

DOCTORAL RESEARCHER, CIRCY WRITING INTO MEANING GROUP

Image: Alix and Celara: ‘WE ARE THE AUTHORS OF THE FUTURE. We like to read to learn how others see things and we would like to be authors ourselves – in the future.’
SPOTLIGHT ON RESEARCH: PARTICIPATORY PROCESSES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: AN EXPLORATION OF SEXUAL CONSENT

Elsie Whittington (Social Work) has been conducting her doctoral research co-funded by CIRCY and by Brook, the UK’s largest sexual health and wellbeing charity for young people, and the work has been developed and delivered in collaboration with young people and staff who work at and access Brook. The aims of the research are twofold: to understand, explore and encourage a culture of youth participation within Brook’s governance, policies and practices; and to co-produce an account of sexual consent rooted in young people’s experiences and understandings.

Elsie has worked directly with 103 young people aged 13-25 years, and 12 professionals (youth workers, sexual health practitioners and educators). Her research has drawn on both practical and theoretical characteristics of feminism, social pedagogy and youth work, and participatory action research. Particular attention has been given to social justice and social change, with a critical awareness of structural and social power dynamics.

Over the course of the project, Elsie has worked with five different groups of young people in different settings. Each group has worked with Elsie to develop their own understanding of consent, whilst collaborating to produce outputs to help others learn more about consent. For example, one group created a blog, another wrote lesson plans, and a third took part in a film project to encourage other young people to think more critically about consent.

Over the last three years, Elsie has found that both young people and adult practitioners can find it challenging to talk meaningfully about consent. The topic is considered ‘awkward’ and ‘ambiguous’ and as such can be difficult to teach and learn about. During her field work, and later during her data analysis, Elsie developed a continuum of sexual agency and consent to help people consider the ‘grey areas’ of intimate communication. Her aim is to move away from a binary notion of consent as ‘yes’ or ‘no’ – a dichotomy Elsie finds too simple to capture the everyday complexities of sexual communication – and so the intention of this model is to enable people to talk more openly about the process of sexual negotiation. Elsie’s continuum has been used in one of the ‘Brook Learn’ digital learning modules, devised for teachers delivering Sex and Relationships Education and funded by ESRC through the University of Sussex Social Science Impact Fund and developed in conjunction with Brook.

Molly: ‘it represents the things I like and hate and how discoveries could change that. ... But my main idea is that the future is always happening and has already become the past.’

Elsie’s continuum of sexual agency and consent helps people consider the ‘grey areas’ of intimate communication, and forms part of a ‘Brook Learn’ digital learning module for teachers delivering Sex and Relationships Education.
Helen Drew’s research, supervised by Robin Banerjee (both Psychology), is concerned with the mental health and wellbeing of children who are ‘looked-after’ or ‘in care’. There are currently over 70,000 children in care in England, the majority of whom enter as a result of abuse or neglect and are supported in foster care. Children in care are known to be at increased risk of mental health problems, and for this group of children who may be traumatised and who have already experienced significant disruption, the transition from primary to secondary school may be particularly challenging.

Helen’s research is framed by a resilience perspective informed by ecological systems theory. Her aim is to better understand how participation in social and leisure activities, especially those in the peer context, and qualities of peer relationships such as close friendships and experiences of loneliness at school, may contribute to changes in both mental health problems and positive wellbeing across these years — over and above support from adults. Working closely with Virtual Schools who support the education of children in care, this longitudinal study has involved children in foster care in the last year of primary school and the first two years of secondary school in 20 local authorities across England. Children and their teachers have completed self-report measures at two time points a year apart. A related study has been carried out with children of the same age who are not in care.

Although the research is ongoing, initial findings have shown the importance of the peer context for socio-emotional wellbeing and mental health. Children in care participate in significantly less social activities than their peers, and report more loneliness in the school setting and lower self-esteem. Importantly, loneliness at school and close-friendships that are more conflictual have both been found to be associated with higher mental health problems across this age group – both directly and through lower self-esteem. In contrast, lower loneliness is associated with better wellbeing through higher self-efficacy. Participation in more social activities is also associated with better overall wellbeing.

Given the fact that peer and school settings have been over-looked in the past when considering the mental health of children in care, these findings highlight important contexts for early intervention. Helen is looking forward to completing the second phase of her research, which she hopes will inform the development of a screening tool for schools to help identify and support those children most at risk of declining mental health.

Given the fact that peer and school settings have been over-looked in the past when considering the mental health of children in care, Helen’s findings highlight important contexts for early intervention.
Poppy: ‘We love Earth and live with aliens on Mars.’
CURRENT

Yusef Bakkali (Sociology)
Working title: Life on road: Youth and urban living in the now
Supervisors: Rachel Thomson (Social Work), Susie Scott (Sociology)

Leethen Bartholomew (Social Work)
Working title: Accusations of child spirit possession and witchcraft: Experiences and outcomes for non-accused children within the same family network
Supervisors: Elaine Sharland, Russell Whiting (both Social Work)

Helen Drew (Mental Health)
Working title: Supporting the mental health of looked-after children across the primary to secondary transition
Supervisor: Robin Banerjee (Psychology)

Matthew Ellis (Social Work)
Working title: Young people, harmful sexual behaviour and identity: How do young peoples’ narratives develop during treatment for harmful sexual behaviour?
Supervisors: Michelle Lefevre, Rachel Thomson (both Social Work)

Owen Emmerson (History)
Working title: Childhood and the emotion of corporal punishment 1938-1986
Supervisors: Claire Langhamer and Lucy Robinson (both History)

Tracey Fuller (Education)
Working title: ‘Can I Trust You?’ Ethics considerations for secondary school counsellors in information sharing and multi-professional working
Supervisors: Janet Boddy (Education), Michelle Lefevre (Social Work)

Fawzia Haeri Mazanderani (Education)
Working title: A map without direction? The experiences, perceptions and practices of previously disadvantaged youth navigating post-school opportunities in South Africa
Supervisors: Barbara Crossouard, John Pryor (both Education)

Jenny Hewitt (Social Work)
Working title: How do UK young adults’ experience civic and political engagement in their everyday lives?
Supervisors: Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work), Janet Boddy (Education)

Perpetua Kirby (Education)
Working title: An exploration of primary school children’s agency in learning
Supervisors: Colleen McLaughlin (external – formerly Education), Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work)

Sandra Lyndon (Education)
Working title: An exploration of Early Years Practitioners’ narratives of child poverty in England
Supervisors: Janet Boddy, Louise Gazeley (both Education)

Manuel Cruz Martinez (Education/Sussex Humanities Lab)
Working title: The capabilities of video games to explore history
Supervisors: Liam Berriman (Digital Humanities), Kate Howland (Informatics), Simon Thompson (Education)

Cynthia Okpokiri (Social Work)
Working title: First generation Nigerian immigrant parents and child welfare issues in Britain
Supervisors: Elaine Sharland, Rachel Thomson (both Social Work)
Sushri Sangita Puhan (Social Work)
Working title: The social process of ‘being adopted’ and ‘becoming family’ – an exploration of adoption practice in India from the perspective of children
Supervisors: Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Barry Luckock (both Social Work)

Tasleem Rana (Social Work)
Working title: Against the odds? A case study of developing community participation with vulnerable inner-city children and young people
Supervisors: Sevasti-Melissa Nolas, Rachel Thomson (both Social Work)

Paul Shuttleworth (Social Work)
Working title: A critical analysis of kinship care for policy and practice
Supervisors: Barry Luckock, Russell Whiting (both Social Work)

Louise Sims (Social Work)
Working title: What can be learned from the practice encounter in adoption support social work?
Supervisors: Barry Luckock, Gillian Ruch (both Social Work)

Roma Thomas (Social Work)
Working title: Doing Boy Work? Young masculine subjectivities and professional practice
Supervisors: Kristine Hickle, Gillian Ruch (both Social Work)

Elsie Whittington (Social Work)
Working title: Participatory processes with young people: exploring sexual consent
Supervisors: Ben Fincham (Sociology), Rachel Thomson (Social Work)

Helen Evans (Social Work)
In what ways is the concept of ‘preparation for independent adult life’ constructed by leaving care workers in the context of their practice with young people as they leave the care system?

Emma Margrett (Education)
Staff experiences of pupils’ self-harming behaviour in an independent girls’ boarding school

Gemma North (Social Work)
Challenges for child protection social work in assessing and working with intra-familial emotional abuse

Keith Perera (Education)
Multiliterate media studies: An investigation into the teaching and learning of an A Level media studies unit within the context of a changing media ecology

Henry: ‘My future without buildings. Because I love nature. I don’t want any pollutions in the future world.’


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Zhang, M-L., Cheung, S-M., Scourfield, J. and Sharland, E. (2016): ‘Comparing fathers and mothers who have social work contact: A research note’ Social Work Research. ISSN 1070-5309
April: 'I love the future. I see the future as a happy place with people sharing and respecting all life and how people live.'
Here, we present selected highlights from CIRCY researchers’ presentations and workshops from the last year. In the UK and internationally, this selection includes knowledge exchange, peer-reviewed conference presentations and invited and keynote lectures and seminars.

Vinnarasan Aruldoss (Social Work) was invited to give a seminar on Doing Research with Children: Some methodological and ethical reflections, at the School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Central University of Tamil Nadu, India, in April 2017. He also spoke about The Political Subject: Politics of children and youth at the International Conference on Youth Development, at Sacred Heart College, Tiruvalluvar University, Tamil Nadu, India in January 2017.

Robin Banerjee (Psychology) gave a keynote presentation at the ‘Children in Wales’ annual conference in Cardiff. Robin also launched a programme of action research on wellbeing in Pembrokeshire schools with a headline presentation to the Head Teachers’ Meeting, and gave keynotes at the EmpathyLab meeting for schools in London, at the Youth Impact event in London on measuring social and emotional development, and at the Principal Educational Psychologists’ Annual Conference in Lymington.

Liam Berriman (Social Work) gave a keynote presentation at a one-day conference on Innovative Perspectives and Methodologies for Researching with Children in June 2017 at the University of Sheffield. In March, he took part in an invited workshop hosted by the Oxford Internet Institute on the consequences of the ‘internet of things’ for children’s data privacy, particularly in relation to interactive toys.

Janet Boddy (Education) visited the University of Chile in October 2016 where she gave an open lecture on Understanding the lives of young people with experience of out-of-home placements: Perspectives from Europe, and delivered a workshop on ethics and methodology on research with ‘vulnerable’ young people. In November 2016, she presented a paper entitled ‘Hearing a different story? Understanding identities and continuities for young adults previously in care’ at an ESRC National Centre for ResearchMethods Colloquium on Narrative and Participatory Methods, held at the Centre for Narrative Research, University of East London. In the same month, Janet co-led a postgraduate workshop on ethics and methodology at the University of Siegen’s International Student Week in Germany. At the European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF) 14th International Conference in Oviedo, Spain in September 2016, Janet and Jeanette Østergaard presented a paper entitled ‘Hearing a different story? Expressing identities and continuities through music for young adults previously in care’.

Helen Drew (Psychology) has presented two papers with Robin Banerjee (Psychology) in relation to her PhD research. At the European Scientific Association on Residential and Family Care for Children and Adolescents (EUSARF) 14th International Conference in Oviedo, Spain in September 2016, she spoke about ‘Supporting the mental health of looked-after children across the primary to secondary school transition’ as part of a symposium on Supporting the physical and mental health of young people in care: Messages from research and practice. At the British Psychological Society Annual Conference, in Brighton in May 2017, she spoke about ‘Longitudinal associations between social activities, relational support and children’s wellbeing’ within a symposium on ‘Social relationships and children’s wellbeing: From family to school’.

Fidelma Hanrahan (Education/Psychology) also attended the EUSARF conference, where she and Janet Boddy (Education) gave papers relating to their Against All Odds? Study. Fidelma spoke about ‘Exploring the interplay of factors that support ‘successful’ transitions form care?’ as part of a symposium organised by Robbie Gilligan, from Trinity College, Dublin.
Kristine Hickle (Social Work) spoke at BASPCAN in November 2016 about ‘Exploring practitioners’ perceptions of environmental risk factors associated with child sexual exploitation’. She also gave a workshop at Brighton and Hove’s annual conference for social workers on Working with Traumatised Parents and presented her work on ‘trauma-informed policing’ at the Annual Devon and Cornwall Public Protection Conference in March and the CSE and Policing Knowledge Hub Conference – the final event for an 18-month research project funded by the Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) and the College of Policing. Kristine was an academic representative on the project and presented on the expert’s panel entitled ‘A victim’s journey’.

Kate Howland (Informatics) presented a poster at the Designing Interfaces for Creativity Symposium which detailed her research on design tools for young people. [https://desinc.mfm.sussex.ac.uk/#postersdemos](https://desinc.mfm.sussex.ac.uk/#postersdemos)

Vicky Lebeau (English) was a speaker and respondent at ‘The Non-Human Child in Film and Media’ conference in May 2017 at Birkbeck College, London. She presented a paper at the event on: ‘Unexpected object relations: The nonhuman child and The Girl with All the Gifts’.

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work) gave a keynote presentation at a joint CIRCY/CSWIR (Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research) workshop on interdisciplinary dialogues for social work research and practice, presenting on ‘Watching and Listening: What actually happens when social workers visit children?’. She also delivered a keynote on ‘Roses and thorns: The doctoral journey from practitioner to research impact’ at the Tavistock Centre’s Doctoral Conference ‘Researching in Troubled Times’. Michelle also gave two papers with Christopher Hall (Visiting Senior Research Fellow, Education): a paper entitled ‘Moving between play and serious talk in social work home visits to children’, at the European Social Work Research Conference, Aalborg, Denmark, and – also in Denmark – ‘Social-worker – child communication during home visits’ at the DANASWAC conference.

Maria Moscati (Law) gave two papers this year: on ‘The rights of LGBTI children’ at the Annual Conference of Avvocatura per i Diritti LGBTI at the Bar Council of Venice, in October 2016, and ‘Cause lawyers in comparative perspective’ at Bar Council Milan in January 2017. Maria and Nuno Ferreira (Law) also gave a paper on ‘Children’s religious freedom in the UK: Reading the Begum decision from a children’s rights perspective’ at a conference on Law, Human Rights and Religion at Nottingham Trent University in December 2016.

Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work) gave a keynote presentation on ‘Youth development in time: The pasts, presents and futures of an evolving practice’ at the International Youth Development Conference, Sacred Heart College, Tirupattur, Tamil Nadu, India. She was an invited speaker on ‘Reflecting on publics creating methodologies’, at an event on Ethics and Early Intervention in Mental Health: Promoting Change through Research as part of the BeGOOD Project, Neuroscience, Ethics & Society, at the University of Oxford. With her colleague, Connectors study Research Fellow, Christos Varvantakis (Social Work), Melissa presented ‘Exploring the antecedents of youth political engagement’ at Impact Hub Athens, Greece on 5 September 2016. The pair also presented at the First CATCH-EyoU Conference in Athens in March. (For more examples of dissemination from the Connectors study, see [https://connectorsstudy.wordpress.com/publications/](https://connectorsstudy.wordpress.com/publications/)). Melissa also presented with other CIRCY and Social Work colleagues, including papers with Charles Watters and Rea Maglajlic (both Social Work) on ‘The road ahead: Exploring the role of place and mobility in contemporary systems of social support’ at the BSA Conference in Manchester, and on ‘The ‘refugee crisis’ and engaged social psychology’ at the SPSSI-UK Symposium 2016 on The Current Migration Crisis in Europe in Cardiff.
Lucy Robinson (History) was MC and interviewer with Viv Albertine from The Slits on women and musical inspiration at the Odditorium Brighton Festival in May 2017. She also gave the keynote address at the Writing Youth conference in Sheffield in May, and presented ‘Heroes in Face Paint: Adam Ant and military masculinities in Thatcher’s Britain’ at the International Conference Men and Masculinities: Politics, Policy, Praxis in Orebro, Sweden in June 2017.

Gillian Ruch (Social Work) spoke about the Talking and Listening to Children research project at the European Social Work Research Conference as part of a symposium on Theorising Ordinary, Everyday Child Care Social Work. She also gave a keynote presentation to Human Development Scotland in March 2017 entitled Turning a blind eye: The impact of trauma on services.

Louise Sims (Social Work) presented a paper on ‘Transformation and temporalities in adoption practice’ at the Nordic Children and Families Research Network, University of Århus in Denmark.

Rachel Thomson (Social Work) was invited to contribute to a panel on interdisciplinarity held by the Academy of Social Sciences conference on ‘Interdisciplinarity: Challenges and opportunities for Social Sciences’. Rachel spoke about ‘Interdisciplinarity and the future of the discipline’. Also on the theme of interdisciplinarity, Rachel presented the paper ‘Towards a rapprochement between sociology and psychoanalysis? Challenges, impasses and ways forward’, at a conference co-organised by the BSA, Institute of Psychoanalysis, UCL and Independent Social Research Foundation in November 2016. She also gave keynotes and invited papers, including ‘A surplus singularity: the case as topos and trope in interdisciplinary research’ at the University of Melbourne and ‘QLR research and policy in the UK: Potential, possibilities and constraints’, at the University of New South Wales. Rachel also spoke at SFI (Danish National Centre for Social Research), giving a paper with Jeanette Østergaard on ‘Awkward cases and surprising conversations: working across qualitative and quantitative data sets on youth transitions’ in January 2017. In March, she gave a paper on ‘Curating childhoods: starting with the archive’ at ‘Re-visioning the regulation of data sharing’, part of an international symposium at Linkoping University Sweden. Also in March, Rachel spoke about creative methods in qualitative longitudinal research with young people, to GAGE, Overseas Development Institute, London.

Dorte Thorsen (Global Studies) spoke about teenage migrant girls’ experiences of working in domestic service in the city at the Women’s Forum of Dover & Deal Constituency Labour Party in March 2017. She also played a key role in the International Conference ‘Migrating out of Poverty: From Evidence to Policy’ in London in March, which included a plenary on adolescent migrant girls and several individual papers focusing on migration, youth and education. Dorte spoke about her work on child labour at a Chatham House event in July 2017, and delivered a workshop on youth migration and development in conjunction with Migrating Out Of Poverty (MOOP), Save the Children, Care International and Christian Aid.

Christos Varvantakis (Social Work) gave a paper on ‘Imagination, Reflection and Representation’, as part of the ‘Space in Education and Childhood’ seminar at the University of Athens in May. In March, he gave a paper with Sevasti-Melissa Nolas (Social Work) on using children’s maps in comparative ethnography for ‘LivingMaps Seminars: New Directions in Ethnocartography’ in London. Christos also spoke about cartographic work with children at the 7th Nordic Geographers Meeting in Stockholm, and at the ‘2nd Images of Children and the Future Conference’ at Flensburg University in Germany. In October, he presented on children’s perceptions of the Acropolis at a conference about photography in Greece.

Nicola Yuill and Julie Coultas from the ChaTLab (Psychology) presented their work on the development of conformity, and on transmission of nursery rhymes across generations, at the Culture Conference, University of Birmingham in May (see @CultConf).
CIRCY MEMBERS AND STEERING GROUP

Vinnarasan Aruldoss (Social Work)
Yusef Bakkali (Sociology)
Robin Banerjee (Psychology, CIRCY Steering Group)
Hester Barron (History, CIRCY Steering Group)
Leethen Bartholomew (Social Work)
Nehaal Bajwa (Education)
Liam Berriman (Social Work)
Janet Boddy (Education, Director of CIRCY)
Jo Bridgeman (Law)
Rachel Burr (Social Work)
Georgina Christou (Anthropology)
Jessica Louise Cotney (Psychology)
Fiona Clements (Law)
Gabrielle Daoust (International Relations)
Richard Dickens (Economics)
Helen Drew (Psychology)
Matthew Ellis (Social Work)
Owen Emmerson (History)

Helen Evans (Social Work)
Bobbie Farsides (Brighton and Sussex Medical School)
Anne-Meike Fechter (Anthropology, CIRCY Steering group)
Nuno Ferreira (Law)
Andy Field (Psychology)
Hannah Field (English)
Zoe Flack (Psychology)
Tracey Fuller (Education)
Darya Gaysina (Psychology)
Louise Gazeley (Education)
Jenny Hewitt (Social Work)
Kristine Hickle (Social Work)
Tamsin Hinton-Smith (Education)
Kate Howland (Informatics)
Ifthikar Hussain (Economics)
Malcolm James (Media and Film)
Pamela Kea (Anthropology)
Heather Keating (Law)
Russell King (Geography)
Perpetua Kirby (Social Work)
Claire Langharn (History)
Michael Lawrence (Media and Film)
Hilary Lawson (Social Work)
Vicky Lebeau (English)
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Karen Lowton (Sociology)
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Keith Perera (Education)

John Pryor (Education)

Sushri Sangita Puhan (Social Work)

Tasleem Rana (Social Work)

Vanessa Regan (Education)

Lucy Robinson (History)

Gillian Ruch (Social Work)

David Sancho (Anthropology)

Elaine Sharland (Social Work)

Jacqui Shepherd (Education)

Paul Shuttleworth (Social Work)

Louise Sims (Social Work)

Alice Skelton (Psychology)

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Rebecca Webb (Education)

Catherine Will (Sociology)

Elsie Whittington (Social Work, CIRCY Steering Group/GTRA)

Nicola Yuill (Psychology)

Susie Arnott is a CIRCY Honorary Research Fellow, freelance film-maker, media professional and co-founder of Walking Pictures.

Susannah Bowyer is Research and Development Manager, Research in Practice.

Sara Bragg is a Principal Research Fellow, Education Research Centre, University of Brighton.

David Buckingham is Emeritus Professor of Media and Communications at Loughborough University, UK, and a Visiting Professor at the Norwegian Centre for Child Research.

Jenny Clifton, is an Independent Consultant (formerly Office of the Children’s Commissioner).

Ros Edwards is Professor of Sociology at the University of Southampton.

Ann Phoenix is Professor of the Department of Childhood, Families and Health at the Thomas Coram Research Unit, UCL Institute of Education.

June Statham is Emerita Professor of Education and Family Support at the UCL Institute of Education.

Heinz Sünker is Professor of Social Pedagogy at Bergische Universität, Wuppertal, Germany.

Uma Vennam is Professor of Social Work at Sri Padmavathi Mahila Visvavidyalayam University in Tirupati, India.
LOCATION

The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is located within the School of Education and Social Work which is based 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. London is one hour away by train, and there is easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

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