

# CIRCY NEWSLETTER

AUTUMN 2023

## Welcome back

A warm welcome back to everyone for the start of this new of the academic year. We hope that you've all had restful summer. CIRCY is starting this academic year with some big and exciting news! Just before the summer, we were amongst [one of 12 research centres at Sussex who have been awarded Centre of Excellence status](#) by the University. This is a fantastic recognition of the work we all do at CIRCY, and highlights how childhood and youth research has become a key priority at Sussex. We will be sharing more information about what Centre of Excellence status means for CIRCY over the coming year.

Over this summer we have also had a refresh of the CIRCY leadership team. Dr Liam Berriman has taken up the role of CIRCY Director, taking over from Prof Michelle Lefevre after four years leading the Centre. We also now have two Deputy Directors joining CIRCY's leadership team: Dr Perpetua Kirby (Education) and Dr Simon Flacks (Law). Michelle will remain an active member of CIRCY's steering group.



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## Meet the new CIRCY Leadership Team

### CIRCY's New Director

**Liam Berriman** is a Senior Lecturer in Childhood and Youth Studies, and joined Sussex ten years ago this September. He has worked in several roles at Sussex, including as a researcher in CIRCY on the 'Everyday Childhoods' project, and a research lecturer in the Sussex Digital Humanities Lab. Liam's research focuses on children's experiences of living in a digital and datafied world, and he is writing a book for Policy Press on the history of children as data subjects. He is currently involved in two Nuffield projects, where he is contributing to work looking at how children's and families' voices can be represented in information and data practices in child welfare. Liam is also a safeguarding governor for a local primary school, and co-editor of the journal *Children & Society*.



### CIRCY's PGRA

**Brontë McDonald** is a Research Assistant for the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY). She supports the centre's leaders, develops and organises centre activities, provides administrative support, and assists with the centre's contribution to the University's research environment. Brontë's was previously a primary school teacher and her PhD research is working towards developing and evaluating a community-based intervention with primary school-aged children who are experiencing school attendance problems during the Covid-19 pandemic. Her research interests include child mental health particularly anxiety, education, dyslexia, and parent



### CIRCY's New Deputy Directors

**Perpetua Kirby** is a Lecturer in Childhood & Youth and the course lead for the BA Childhood & Youth. Her research interests are children and young people's rights, participation and agency, including democratic approaches to education, as well as ethnographic and multimodal methodologies. Her research currently includes a Nuffield funded project, undertaken with Liam, and she works in, undertaken with Liam, and she works in collaboration with Dr Rebecca Webb looking at transformative models of education in schools and beyond. The latter engages with students' subjectness and includes an interdisciplinary focus on sustainability education in the Global South and North. Perpetua is also a research fellow of the Sussex Sustainability Research Programme.



**Simon Flacks** joined Sussex law school in 2022 as a Senior Lecturer in Criminal Justice. He has previously held positions at the Universities of Westminster and Reading, and graduated with a PhD from the University of Vienna, Austria, in 2013. His research interests revolve around drug law and policy and the implications for children/families, and he has undertaken work into youth justice, criminology, drug use/policy, family law and discrimination. Simon's current focus is on parental substance use and family justice although he continues to work on criminal justice projects.



## CIRCY AUTUMN TERM EVENTS

We are delighted to invite you all to the activities and events we will host this term! Activities and events will be a mix of online, in-person and hybrid events.

- **Imagining Resistance film screening and project exhibition with Dr Kristi Hickie**

10 October / Exhibition: 3-4pm / Film screening and Q&A: 4-6pm  
Digital Humanities Lab, Silverstone Building  
(In-person only)

On the 10 October we will host an exhibition and film screening in the Sussex Humanities Lab for the Imagining Resistance project, a 3-year AHRC-funded project that drew upon participatory visual methods to support young people in understanding and communicating their own acts of resistance. There will be an opportunity to view the creative project outputs, including photographs and a 'protest banner' quilt embroidered and designed by the young participants. We will then screen the project film, created with participants, followed by a discussion and **drinks/nibbles**.

Sign up: [Imagining Resistance Google Form](#)

- **'Children's Life Writing':  
A CLHLWR-CIRCY collaborative lunch-time meeting  
with Dr Margaretta Jolly**

10 October / 1-2pm  
Location: TBC (In-person only)

All are welcome for an informal discussion about possible shared interests and directions, with the Centre for Life History and Life Writing Research and the Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth. Please sign up below as lunch will be provided

Sign up: [Children's Life Writing Google Form](#)

- **Just for kids? How the youth decarceration discourse endorses adult incarceration  
with Dr. Hedi Viterbo**

14 November / 4:30-6pm  
Fulton 107 and Online

In this talk, Hedi Viterbo will lay bare three overlooked pitfalls of calls to reduce or abolish the penal confinement of youth, particularly in the UK and the US. First, despite their anti-carceral semblance, such calls persistently portray most people in trouble with the law—namely, adults—as deserving of imprisonment. Second, this ageist rhetoric often disregards adult vulnerability. Thus, despite adults' greater medical vulnerability to COVID-19, some organisations pushed for youth to be prioritised for release from prisons during the pandemic. Third, the youth decarceration discourse reproduces essentialist assumptions about youth, which rest on questionable science and downplay the socially constructed dimension of age differences. Doubtless, there are compelling arguments against penal confinement, but it is only decarceration across the age spectrum that can truly challenge carceral thinking—and ageism.

Sign up: [Just for kids? Google Form](#)

- **CIRCY Coffee and Collaboration networking meeting**

Date TBC / Location TBC

In our termly CCC meeting, Henry Smith (Social Work), Ilepele Mapemba (Law, Politics and Sociology), and Richard Gorman (Clinical and Experimental Medicine) will each make a short presentation on an aspect of their research relating to children, childhood or youth. There will then be plenty of time for questions and discussion. Do drop by with your afternoon cuppa or join us online!

# IDEAS IN ACTION

'Ideas in Action' is a regular CIRCY event for members where colleagues can present new ideas for interdisciplinary feedback and suggestions, e.g. a new or reworked bid, book proposals, or plans for knowledge exchange/ impact generation.

CIRCY Ideas in Action with Dr. Lisa Holmes  
and Jeongen Park

22 November / 2-3pm / Fulton 107

## AUTUMN TERM VISITORS

**Dr Hamide Elif Uzumcu** (University of Padova, Italy)  
– Some of our may recognise Elif's name, who was a visiting doctoral researcher at CIRCY in Spring 2019. Elif is visiting CIRCY from 9-13th October to undertake some writing with Dr Liam Berriman and will be attending CIRCY events during her visit.

**Dr Tonje Gundersen** (Oslo Met, Norway) – Tonje is a Senior Research at NOVA, and will be visiting us from October to November. Tonje's research focuses on child protection law in Norway, individual residential care and young people's involvement with drugs and crime. Tonje will share her research with CIRCY colleagues during her visit, with details to follow soon.

## POSTGRADUATE RESEARCHERS NETWORK MEETINGS

The CIRCY postgraduate researchers' network meets approximately twice a term to share knowledge and support, with discussions facilitated by the CIRCY team. Topics for discussion to date have included the ethical and practical issues to bear in mind in fieldwork with children and young people, participatory research with children and young people, and researching in COVID-19 times.

If you are a PhD student at Sussex who isn't yet a member of this network, and you think your work might fall within [CIRCY's research areas](#), please let us know by emailing Brontë so that we can add you to the list: [bm333@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:bm333@sussex.ac.uk)

All are welcome!

### CIRCY PGR Welcome Coffee and Cake

26 October / 1-2PM / In person - Ful 204

The PGR network consists of postgraduate students from across the university who are researching with/about children and youth.

We meet twice termly to discuss different themes/topics around researching children and youth. This academic year starts with a welcome meeting to introduce incoming and ongoing postgraduate students.

### CIRCY PGR network meeting

29 November / 4:30-5:30PM / Online  
(Zoom link distributed through mailing list)

How to "think with" children and young people? Using philosophical inquiry. A discussion with Rebecca Webb (Social Work and Social Care), Floss Bull (Education and Social Work) and Loreto Rodriguez (Social work and Social Care).

To join our PGR network please contact  
[bm333@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:bm333@sussex.ac.uk)

# WHO'S IN CIRCY

## CIRCY Leadership Team

- **Director:** Liam Berriman (Social Work and Social Care) [l.j.berriman@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:l.j.berriman@sussex.ac.uk)
- **Deputy Director:** Perpetua Kirby (Education) [p.kirby@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:p.kirby@sussex.ac.uk)
- **Deputy Director:** Simon Flacks (Law) [s.flacks@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:s.flacks@sussex.ac.uk)
- **Postgraduate Research Assistant:** Brontë McDonald (Psychology) [bm333@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:bm333@sussex.ac.uk)

## CIRCY Steering Group

Our Steering group meets termly to guide and facilitate the work of CIRCY.

Current steering group members are:

Robin Banerjee (Psychology)

Janet Boddy (Education)

Hannah Field (English)

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work)

Kathryn Lester (Psychology)

Jo Moran-Ellis (Sociology)

Kirsty Pattrick (Mass Observation)

Dorte Thorsen (Geography)

Rebecca Webb (Education)

If your research has the rights, concerns and/or perspective of children and young people at its heart, and are interested in joining our steering group please contact [Liam](#). The minimum commitment is to attend a termly steering group meeting, and to attend or help facilitate at least one CIRCY event per term.

We are particularly interested to hear from people in Schools or Departments currently unrepresented on the steering group.

# Might you become a member of CIRCY?

## What is CIRCY?

The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is a pan-university research centre at the University of Sussex, with a membership that spans social sciences, arts, humanities and professional fields including social work, law, education and health. CIRCY's research is interdisciplinary and international in scope, united by a critical engagement with children and young people's lives in time, and a focus on the rights, voice and welfare of the child or young person at the centre of inquiry.

## Who can join CIRCY?

CIRCY would like to encourage academics, doctoral researchers and others across the university who write and research in these fields to become members.

## What does CIRCY membership involve?

CIRCY holds lots of events through the year which members can attend. This includes seminars, reading groups, methodology workshops, writing retreats, and work in progress workshops where members can get feedback on research or writing ideas.

## Get in touch!

If you're interested in taking part in any of our upcoming members events or other activities, or just want to find out more, contact CIRCY Research Fellow, Brontë McDonald: [bm333@sussex.ac.uk](mailto:bm333@sussex.ac.uk)

And please let us know if you have any ideas for members' events or seminars, or need any support with developing research bids, or other research-related activities, such as networking events or conference attendance.



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