MEMBERS’ NEWS

CIRCY’s Director and Co-Director roles change every three years. This ensures that our ideas stay fresh as we bring in new perspectives and keep moving forward.

In May, Janet Boddy (Education) – who has directed CIRCY since 2016, and co-directed the Centre from its inception in 2012 - handed the CIRCY Director’s role over to Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care). Michelle has been CIRCY’s Co-Director for the last three years. She will be supported by Co-Directors, Jo Moran-Ellis (Sociology) and Rebecca Webb (Education).

Janet will remain an active member of CIRCY’s steering group.

THE TEAM

CIRCY’s New Director …
Michelle is Professor of Social Work and was previously Editor-in-Chief of the journal Child and Family Social Work. Prior to her academic career, Michelle qualified and practised as a social worker and arts psychotherapist. Much of her research has addressed communication with children and young people in the context of professional practice, and she serves on the British Association of Social Work’s Children and Families Policy, Practice and Education Group. Recent research undertaken includes studies for the Office of the Children’s Commissioner, and Department for Education on topics including contextual safeguarding and sexual exploitation.

... and Co-Directors
Jo is a Professor of Sociology whose research has focused on two main areas: the (then newly emergent) sociology of childhood and, separately, questions of research methodology with an emphasis on mixed methods. Her current emphasis is on questions of theorising agency and social actorship in childhood, with a particular interest in early childhood.

Rebecca is a Lecturer in Primary and Early Years Education, and her research spans interests in purposes of education and schooling (including Early Years Education); discourses of citizenship, rights and responsibilities, and belonging; equality/diversity; ideas of learning and teaching; gender identities and subjectivities; politics and the political. She is currently engaged in a study for TACTYC (the Association for Professional Development in Early Years) concerned with possibilities and challenges for state maintained nurseries in England.
NEW RESEARCH AND CONSULTANCY

Maria Moscati (Law) has secured a grant from the Socio-Legal Studies Association with Peter Dunne from the University of Bristol for their research project, “We Exist Too”: Young trans-perspectives on legal gender recognition laws in England and Wales. Maria is also developing new research on Surrogacy, IVF and Children’s Rights.

Janet Boddy (Education), Sushri Sangita Puhan (CIRCY doctoral researcher), Gabrielle Daoust and Synne Dyvik (Global Studies) are part of a successful bid led by David Orr (Social Work) to the UK Collaborative on Development Research, on Safeguarding in international development research. Janet and David both serve on the UKCDR advisory group on safeguarding, with Janet’s contribution relating to her work on childhood research ethics.

Janet has also been chairing a ‘Task and Finish Group’ for the Nuffield Foundation funded by the Family Justice Observatory establishing quality standards for qualitative research in the field of family justice.

Congratulations to Anna Hutchings (Social Work and Social Care), who has been awarded funding from the South East Network for Social Sciences (SeNSS) to study a full-time PhD for her research “Let’s Talk About Sex”: Conversations between Female Social Workers and Young Male Clients’ to be supervised by Michelle Lefevre and Kristi Hickle (both Social Work and Social Care).

MEMBERS’ PUBLICATIONS

Nuno Ferreira’s (Law) Gender and Queer Perspectives on Brexit collection (edited with Moira Dustin and Sue Millns) was published in January. Many chapters in the book relate to children, in particular Walker’s, Solanke’s and Iusmen’s.


Congratulations to Michelle Lefevre, Kristi Hickle, Barry Luckock and Gillian Ruch (all Social Work and Social Care) who were awarded the British Journal of Social Work’s Kay McDougall Prize for their 2017 article, ‘Building trust with children and young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation: The professional challenge’.

Rebecca Webb and Perpetua Kirby (both Education) have published a new paper relating to their Transform In Education project: Webb, R. and Kirby, P. (2019); ‘Modelling Transformative Education’, FORUM, 61 (1): 89-103.

Janet Boddy (Education) has a new paper presenting cross-national analysis from Against All Odds?: Boddy, J., Bakkeiteig, E. and Østergaard, J. (2019): ‘Navigating Precarious Times? The experience of young adults who have been in care in Norway, Denmark and England’ Journal of Youth Studies.

PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT AND KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

It’s been a busy few months for CIRCY researchers, who have been travelling the world sharing learning from their work. Selected highlights are noted below, but look out for our Annual Report later in the summer!

In February, Feylyn Lewis (Social Work) attended a EuroCarers ‘Care4Dem’ training workshop in Carpi, Italy. Feylyn serves on the Care4Dem project’s advisory committee. Feylyn also attended the inaugural meeting of the National Alliance for Caregiving advisory committee for the ‘Caregiving in the US 2020’ research study in Washington D.C., USA. In March, she was the keynote speaker for the American Association of Caregiving Youth’s annual conference in Boca Raton, Florida, USA.

Also in March, the Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove displayed the ‘Young Carers in Focus’ photo exhibition of young carers engaged in the Young Carers’ service and included portraits of Feylyn and of Saul Becker (Provost and CIRCY Steering Group member); Feylyn is a Trustee and Saul is Patron of the Centre.

31 January 2019 was Young Carers’ Awareness Day and, as Patron of the Brighton and Hove Carers Centre, Saul gave the keynote address for the charity’s event to celebrate this national day dedicated to recognizing the contributions of young people with caring responsibilities and originally started by Carers Trust.

In May, Saul gave the keynote speech at a conference in Iceland, speaking about Young Carers at the University Hospital in Reykjavik. The theme of the conference was supporting relatives – including children – of patients with a long term mental illness, providing support and improving communication. The event was attended by 200+ social workers and healthcare professionals from across Iceland.
Janet Boddy (Education) has also been presenting her work in Iceland: in February she gave the opening keynote at the ‘Icelandic Association of Social Workers Annual Conference’, speaking about ‘Thinking Through Family’. In January, Janet and colleagues from her Norwegian Research Council project ‘Against All Odds?’ held a one-day conference for policy makers and professionals in Oslo. Janet continues in her Adjunct Professor role at NOVA, OsloMet University.

In May, Maria Moscati (Law) gave a presentation during Pride in Italy, on Sexual Orientation, Gender Identity and Children’s Rights.

Dominic Dean (Research Quality and Impact) presented at the third annual Queer Modernisms conference at the University of Oxford on ‘Children, Queerness, and Flight in John Masefield’s 1935 children’s novel, The Box of Delights’. He will have a chapter on this topic in a Palgrave edited book, Aviation in the Literature and Culture of Interwar Britain, due out later in 2019. Dominic is also finalising a chapter on ‘Young Men in Literary and Cultural Representations of Thatcherism’ for a new Palgrave edited book, The Social and Cultural Legacy of Thatcherism in the 21st Century, also due out later in 2019.

Since the December launch of TRANSFORM-IN EDUCATION, seeking to broaden schooling beyond a focus on conformity, Rebecca Webb and Perpetua Kirby (both Education) have given radio interviews on BBC Sussex Drive Time and Radio 4’s Women’s Hour, run a teacher workshop at the National Education Union conference, hosted at UCL Institute of Education, and received a Sussex impact grant to work with staff in a local secondary school this summer term.

Robin Banerjee (Psychology) has been speaking about his work on children’s social and emotional wellbeing. He gave a keynote presentation at an all-Wales conference on wellbeing in January, and was a member of the Nesta Education Conference panel on measurement of social and emotional skills in London in February. In March he gave keynotes at an EmpathyLab event for schools on empathy and reading in Birmingham, at a West Sussex conference for SENCos in Arundel and at the Carnegie UK Trust Kindness Innovation Network meeting in Glasgow. On 11 June, he was in conversation with novelist Malorie Blackman and poet Paulo Coelho at Waterstones Piccadilly, in celebration of Empathy Day.

Pam Thurstchwell (English) and Rachel Thomson (Social Work) took part in a ‘Waiting Times’ research workshop at Birkbeck, University of London in May. Discussing questions of adolescence, chronicity and time, Pam spoke about her next monograph on modern adolescence and time, About the Young Idea: Adolescence and Time Travel, and Rachel discussed her ESRC research which revisits and reanimates data from the 1988-90 Women Risk and AIDS project, looking at what changes and what endures over 30 years for young women, feminism and sexual health.

In March, Rachel ran a workshop for youth and community workers at the People’s History Museum in Manchester which explored how archived data from the Women Risk & AIDS project can be used as a basis for youth and community work with girls and women exploring sexual health and social change.

Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care) was invited to be a Visiting Professor at Trinity College, Dublin, when she visited in April and presented her work on communication with children to social work students and a public lecture on her research into child sexual exploitation. In March, Michelle gave a webinar for social workers across the country on her research into social workers’ communication and engagement with children and young people in home visits. Also in March, Michelle presented her research on child sexual exploitation to the Sussex Family Justice Board Quality Circle, discussing how young people’s rights to both participation and protection need to be integrated in situations of child sexual exploitation. As part of her ongoing role in the British Association of Social Workers’ Children and Families Policy Practice and Education Group, Michelle leads a workstream on child sexual exploitation and contributes to the 80/20 campaign on increasing the proportion of time social workers spend on direct work with families.

Gillian Ruch (Social Work and Social Care) has also been involved in the BASW 80/20 campaign. Her Talking and Listening to Children (TLC) research project and ‘Kitbag’ day conference was co-hosted with British Association of Social Workers (BASW England) under the auspices of the BASW 80/20 campaign focusing on increasing the percentage and quality of time social workers spend with children and families. The event kick-started the BASW campaign and was attended by 80 practitioners and managers.

Kristi Hickle (Social Work and Social Care) has been sharing learning from her work on trauma-informed practice and complex safeguarding needs of young people. She was keynote speaker at the ‘East Sussex World Social Work Day’ event in March, and in February she presented her work at Surrey’s multidisciplinary ‘Exploited and Missing Children Delivery Group’. She’s also delivered workshops and training in that period for East Sussex County Council, and at Brighton and Hove Children’s Services, including a workshop at their on new research which sought the views of young people who had experienced secure and/or residential accommodation following risk of child sexual exploitation.
CIRCY EVENTS

As well as our highly successful seminar series (see our last newsletter for details) we have hosted two members’ events this term:

In January, Janet Boddy and Rebecca Webb (both Education) hosted a writing workshop for CIRCY researchers to provide a CIRCY ‘space to think with’ about ‘quality’ in academic writing. 10 researchers took part, representing four academic departments and a variety of research interests. The group listened, read each other’s work and used an appreciative inquiry approach to think through questions of ‘quality’ in our work – and what it means for how and why we write – to consider strategies to take forward into new writing. A Writing Retreat is planned for 22-23 July.

In March, Liam Berriman (Social Work and Social Care/Sussex Humanities Lab), Martin Bitnner (visiting ethnographer from Flensburg University, Germany) and Rebecca Webb (Education) hosted the workshop for doctoral researchers, ‘Can you see the tangent in your research?’ designed as an exploration of issues of ‘sensitivity’ within qualitative inquiry. Participants shared data from research on issues considered to be ‘sensitive’ where sensitivity was seen as something that plays on our senses as we gather and interpret data whilst being situated beyond the sociological and historical divide between intimacy/privacy and the public sphere. The goal of the workshop was the achievement of shared understandings and mappings of ‘sensitivity’ and to provide a confidential and non-judgemental space for this discussion of data and emerging ideas.

CHILDHOOD AND YOUTH STUDIES MA

Currently led by Liam Berriman (Social Work/Sussex Humanities Lab), the Childhood and Youth Studies MA course continues to go from strength to strength and now has a permanent feature on the CIRCY Journal blog. Prize winning dissertations are available to view and download here, including last year’s winners:
• Shannon Payne - ‘Through the Rose-Tinted Lens: Young people’s perspectives on romantic love in England’
• Nuri Baabafka - awarded the Cathy Urwin Prize for Work with Greatest Impact on Practice for her research on ‘The Effect of Boko Haram Insurgency on Child Education in North-Eastern Nigeria’.

Keep 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, Loreto Rodriguez: L.Rodriguez@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 or writing - or with research-related activities, such as networking events or conference attendance.