Please let us extend our very best wishes to you and your loved ones as we all grapple with the significant emotional and practical challenges engendered by COVID-19. We are writing to you in the midst of the lockdown period, and are aware that many of you will be struggling to find time to engage properly with your research and knowledge exchange at this current time.

We know that staff and students are being affected in a range of ways – illness of you or your families; increased caring responsibilities; learning to home-school your children; learning to teach online; disruption of research fieldwork; insecurity of employment; and there is the emotional load of what we are all experiencing and seeing around us.

And yet, in spite of all this, we are aware of so much exciting research still going on, including new initiatives to learn more about the experience of children, young people, and families as they grapple with the current crisis. So we decided to press ahead with our summer newsletter as it gave us such a boost to hear about what is going on. We hope it will do the same for you.

Needless to say, however, there are many fewer events this term than usual. Not just because of the logistical difficulties, but because we know most people have less time available than usual. We will get in touch with you via email to let you know about any new upcoming events as the COVID-19 situation evolves. Hopefully, normal business will be able to resume soon!

We have included some brief details at the end of this newsletter about what CIRCY is about and who might want to join. So we encourage you to share this newsletter with new members of staff, doctoral researchers, and any other colleagues or students who might be interested in CIRCY and our activities. If you haven’t already, do also take a look at our last annual report (downloadable from our homepage).

Email Loreto Rodriguez [L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk] to be added to the CIRCY mailing list.

HOW IS LOCKDOWN AFFECTING FAMILY LIFE? STUDY PARTICIPANTS NEEDED!

Families with school-age children are being asked to take part in research for the University of Sussex.

A team of psychologists led by Psychology doctoral researcher, Alison Lacey, and Senior Lecturer in Psychology, Dr Kathryn Lester, and including Professor of Clinical Child Psychology, Samantha Cartwright-Hatton, is investigating how family life and wellbeing are being affected by the COVID-19 pandemic. They are asking parents and guardians of primary school age children to complete an online survey to help them track the impact of the pandemic on families.

Dr Lester, an expert in child psychology, said: “With the entire nation in lockdown, families across the UK are adjusting to a dramatically different way of life. Children are no longer at school, parents are learning how to home-school, and many are also simultaneously working from home.”

Families who decide to take part will be asked to complete an online questionnaire - now and at three-weekly intervals until COVID-19 restrictions are no longer in place. Participants will be asked about their family and household; parents and child emotional wellbeing; and their relationships with family and friends.

All participants who return completed questionnaires will be eligible for a prize draw with the chance of winning £100, £50 and £25 vouchers.

The results will be written into a scientific report.
NEW PUBLICATIONS


• April saw the publication of a special issue of research exploring narrative sense-making and social action in the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*. The special issue is on of the outcomes of Rachel Thomson’s period as visiting Professor at VIVE, the Danish national Centre for Social Research. Building on a symposium held in Copenhagen in June 2018, the special issue explores how our ability to make futures depends in part on our ability to tell stories. It also includes rich examples of qualitative longitudinal research, including work with young people and those facing cancer diagnoses, drug dependency and school exclusion. Email Rachel for more information.

• **Michelle Lefevre** and **Jeri Damman** (both Social Work and Social Care) published a report: *Practice Direction 12J: What is the experience of lawyers working in private law children cases?* The research looked at a practice direction introduced to guide courts, CAFCASS and practitioners in cases that involve domestic abuse and/or coercive control. One concern that emerged was that children were not always listened to or considered in relation to contact with an abusive parent.

• **Michelle Lefevre** and Dr Tirion Havard, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work at London South Bank University, have had a paper accepted by the *Journal of Gender-Based Violence*: ‘Beyond the Power and Control Wheel: How abusive men manipulate mobile phone technologies to facilitate coercive control’. The paper was based on Tirion’s doctoral research and includes examples of how abusive fathers manipulated their children to spy on the family home.

RESEARCH AND ENGAGEMENT

**New Research Collaborations**

**New research collaboration by Janet Boddy (Social Work and Social Care) & NatCen Social Research for the Family Justice Observatory.**

A [new research review](#) will examine children’s family contact post-separation and its impact on their wellbeing and development. Encompassing contact with birth parents, siblings and other relatives, the review will help build understanding of how family courts in England and Wales – in the domain of public law – can make evidence-informed decisions about contact arrangements in children’s best interests.

**Public Engagement**

Research Fellow, **Feylyn Lewis** (Social Work and Social Care), serves on the International Young Carers Conference Scientific Committee which is scheduled to take place on 16-17 November 2020 in Brussels, Belgium. The call for abstracts is open until 30 April 2020. See details of the programme and instructions regarding abstracts.

Feylyn also attended the Horizon 2020 ME-WE Adolescent Young Carers Project biannual consortium meeting in Brussels (see pic at bottom of previous column).

The [Aiming High!](#) young carers project led by Feylyn and the Carers Centre for Brighton and Hove reached completion. The qualitative project featured focus groups with young carers living in the Brighton area on their aspirations for and barriers to higher education.

**Kristi Hickle** and **Michelle Lefevre** (both Social Work and Social Care) presented their emergent findings on a study of child criminal exploitation along the south coast on 13 February - first to a group of senior leaders, and subsequently to a group of practitioners and practice managers in East Sussex children’s services - to further develop recommendations for practice. The study, also conducted with [Rachel Larkin](#) (Independent Reviewing Officer for Looked After Children), involved interviews with young people, parents, professionals, and a practice survey.

**Michelle Lefevre** presented to a group of social work practitioners and managers in Lincoln on ‘Promising approaches to address the criminal and sexual exploitation of young people’ on 6 February. The event was supported by the [Centre for Social Work Practice](#) and the [British Association of Social Workers](#).

The practice recommendations were developed through two earlier studies, conducted with other Sussex colleagues.
KNOWLEDGE EXCHANGE

‘Reanimating Data:
Building a community around and archive’

On International Women’s Day, a new archive (and creative work using it) was launched at the Central Reference Library in Manchester. It was the culmination of the Reanimating Data Project: Experiments with people, places and archives, funded by the ESRC’s Transformational Research programme.

Over 18 months, the project team - Rachel Thomson; Research Fellow (Social Work & Social Care), Ester McGeeney; Lecturer in Digital Humanities, Dr Sharon Webb; and Doctoral Researcher (Childhood & Youth), Rosie Gahnstrom at the University of Sussex, and Dr Niamh Moore, Senior Lecturer in the School of Social & Political Science at the University of Edinburgh - have been working with youth and community groups in Manchester engaging with interviews of teenage girls from 1989 talking about their lives, loves and ambitions.

Experiments presented on the day included a theatre project with the Women’s Theatre Society of the University of Manchester, a queer reading of the archive by the young women’s group at the Proud Trust, and animations made by the Levenshulme Girls group exploring identity then and now – all captured on film.

To find out more about the day, the archive, the film and the project, read the blog.

SPOTLIGHTS ON RESEARCH

As many of you know, CIRCY usually produces an annual report in July - our yearly labour of love! This year, we are shifting the format so that the annual report will consist mainly of more lengthy ‘Spotlight’ items on research projects, publications, knowledge exchange and impact building, rather than shorter articles shared in these quarterly newsletters.

Spotlights always generate a lot of interest - from both internal and external readers - as they really give a flavour of important findings, innovative methodologies, and public engagement from doctoral researchers and faculty.

So consider this advance notice for you to consider submitting an entry of your own for this year’s ‘Spotlights on Research’ report. Each Spotlight should be 300-600 words and written in the first person in engaging language (we want non-specialists to read and be able to understand them).

You should reference your study and/or linked publications at the end, including any relevant web links. Images - particularly pictures featuring children and young people engaged in research or knowledge exchange - are very welcome.

If you would like your work considered for inclusion, please send a draft Spotlight submission to Loreto Rodriguez by 31 May: L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk. Please include:

- Your name and role
- Type of work (eg. research projects, publications, knowledge exchange/impact building)
- Title of proposed piece
- Focus of piece (or the whole piece if you already have it ready)
- Any accompanying images.

The CIRCY steering group will ultimately decide on the content of the report.

AWARDS AND RECOGNITION

Professor Janet Boddy elected a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences

Congratulations to Janet Boddy (Social Work and Social Care) who has been recognised for her outstanding work by the Academy of Social Sciences by being elected a new Fellow of the academy.

Janet is a Professor of Child, Youth & Family Studies. Her research focuses on family lives and services that impact on children and families. She also has a long-standing interest in research ethics and governance.
ONLINE ENGAGEMENT

The CIRCY Blog

Check out CIRCY’s recent blog posts!

This year, we are aiming for a minimum two blogs per term, one of which should be from a doctoral researcher.

Blogs might be about a CIRCY event, a contemporary issue of relevance to children and young people, an relevant external event, a new concept or methodology that members might find interesting, or some real world impact being generated through research.

If you are interested in writing a blog, please contact Rebecca Webb: R.C.Webb@sussex.ac.uk.

Tweet Time!

Don’t forget to follow us on Twitter!

When you tweet about your research, tag @SussexCIRCY and we’ll re-tweet to enhance your visibility!

CIRCY MEMBERSHIP

What is CIRCY?

The Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth (CIRCY) is a pan-university research centre located within the School of Education and Social Work 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 encourages academics, doctoral researchers and others across the university who write and research in these fields to become members.

What does membership involve?

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

How do I join?

Email Loreto Rodriguez [L.Rodriguez@sussex.ac.uk] who will add your contact details to the CIRCY mailing list.

Our Doctoral Researchers

We’re starting to build a network of doctoral researchers across the University whose work has a connection with or relevance to CIRCY.

We plan to run events which will enable researchers involved with CIRCY to get together in various ways and develop shared learning.

If you are a doctoral researcher at Sussex and think your work links with CIRCY’s research areas, let us know by emailing Nehaal Bajwa [N.Bajwa@sussex.ac.uk] who will add you to our members list.

Follow us on Twitter: @SussexCIRCY and on Wordpress: @circyatsussex
WHO'S WHO?

CIRCY Leadership Team

Director:
Michelle Lefevre (Social Work and Social Care)
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Co-Directors:
Rebecca Webb (Education)
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Loreto Rodriguez
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CIRCY Steering Group

- Robin Banerjee (Psychology)
- Hester Barron (History)
- Saul Becker (Social Work and Social Care)
- Liam Berriman (Childhood and Youth/ Social Work and Social Care)
- Janet Boddy (Education)
- Fiona Courage (Mass Observation Archive/Library)
- Nuno Ferreira (Law)
- Dorte Thorsen (Geography)
- Pam Thurschwell (English)

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.