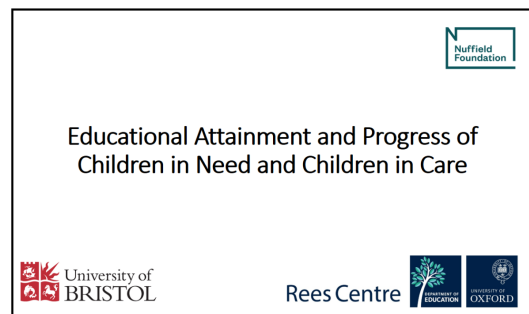


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May 2020



Welcome to the Rees Centre's May newsletter. During these uncertain times, the pandemic is impacting our lives in many different ways and exposing the deep inequalities in our society. Thank you particularly to those of you working on the frontline and those supporting our most vulnerable children and young people during this period of lockdown.

As always, we value your feedback and comments about our work. If you would like to get in touch by email, please contact us at rees.centre@education.ox.ac.uk. Please follow us on [Twitter](#) for the most up to date news about our research and events or visit our [website](#).

If you are interested in the impact of legal decisions on children's care pathways, we are delighted that Professor Judith Masson has agreed to present a webinar on this topic at 12.30pm on 27 May. This event is jointly organised with the Oxford Children's Rights Network and hosted by the Faculty of Law at the University of Oxford. It will be recorded for those who would like to watch at a later time. [More details](#).

Also in this newsletter:

- Find out results of our joint study on the educational attainment and progress of children with a social worker

- Read about new projects including The Hazel Project, building on our previous work focusing on teenagers in foster care
 - Complete a survey to help researchers understand how local authorities and other organisations are using innovative approaches to address complex safeguarding risks faced by young people
 - Catch up with blogs and team news.
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Research Highlights

New report - Educational Attainment and Progress of Children in Need and Children in Care

A new report published by the Rees Centre and the University of Bristol aimed to identify factors that explain the educational 'attainment gap' for Children in Need and Children in Care compared to their peers. [Read executive summary](#) (pdf) or [full report](#) (pdf).

Nikki Luke, who led the study with Professor David Berridge at Bristol, summarises the key findings [in this 7 minute video](#).

Implications for policy and practice include continuing efforts to increase the visibility of the Children in Need group, including proposals contained in the Government's *Children in Need Review* (2019) and raising the profile of the Children in Need group within schools. There would be strong advantages in Virtual Schools, or a similar service, overseeing Children in Need as well as Children in Care.

Further resources:

[Policy brief](#)

[Project webpage](#)

[Blog: Children in Need should get more attention in policy and research](#)

[Lockdown: call to stop GCSE gap for vulnerable widening](#), TES, 27 April 2020

New project announced - The Hazel Project

We are delighted to announce new funding at the Rees Centre from The Hazel Project to build on our work focused on teenagers in foster care.

The first incarnation of the Hazel Project began in the 1970s with the development and introduction of a placement project for adolescents in Kent (1974-1979). This project aimed to arrange foster placements for adolescents thought likely to benefit from a fostering environment. This project developed at a time when fostering for adolescents was not conceived of as a wholly viable option, with residential care placements being the dominant care placement type for adolescents and the level of foster family breakdown at a high. The leading question of the time was: which children are most suitable to be fostered? A practice culture that persisted into the 1970s, one which the Kent Project began to subvert in considering which foster placements would be most suited for adolescents, alongside what qualities, support and skills may foster carers require to meet the individual and care placement needs of looked after adolescents. The Hazel Project at

the Rees Centre - in collaboration with Diverse Care – will return to these challenges in exploring, contemporarily, the promises and constituents of effective specialist and therapeutic fostering placements for adolescents. The research will also address re-emerging debates around the professionalisation of foster carers and how best to meet the needs of adolescents within the family environment. Dr Caroline Cresswell, who joined the Rees Centre in April will conduct an extensive systematic review in the area, the findings of which will be disseminated to contribute to persistent debates and the development of policy and practice in the area of adolescent care. Caroline will be joined by a DPhil student in October 2020, whose research will contribute to the field.

Most downloaded article – Teenagers in foster care: Issues, themes, and debates from and for practice and policy

[This article](#) is one of Child and Family Social Work's top 10% of most downloaded papers in the 12 months following publication, for work published between January 2018 and December 2019. If you would like to read the article but do not have library access, please [get in touch](#) with us. The six day seminar series upon which this work is based was organised by the University of Oxford (Rees Centre and Department of Social Policy), University of Bedfordshire and University of Gothenburg. Reports and videos from the seminar series are freely available on the Rees Centre website [here](#).

Shuker L, Sebba J, Höjer I. Teenagers in foster care: Issues, themes, and debates from and for practice and policy. *Child & Family Social Work*. 2019; 24:349–53.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12650>

Practice Survey of Innovation Approaches - The Innovate Project

We are delighted to partner with colleagues on this new project led by Professor Michelle Lefevre at the University of Sussex and funded by the Economic and Social Research Council. The Innovate Project is exploring ways in which innovation is currently transforming services for young people facing complex extra-familial risks, such as child sexual exploitation, peer-on-peer abuse, criminal exploitation, and gang involvement.

The survey below will help to find out how local authorities and other organisations, large and small, are developing new practice systems and methods to address these issues. It takes about 10 minutes to complete and will close on 30 June.

Please complete if you are a senior professional within an organisation who is aware of, and involved in, strategic planning of services for young people experiencing complex safeguarding risks. [Open survey](#).

Follow progress on the project [@innovateproj](#)

Email the [project co-ordinator at the University of Sussex](#) to join the mailing list.

Challenging stigma in the care system - Bright Spots

As a result of findings from the Bright Spots project ([Insight Paper March 2020](#)), the Sheffield Children in Care council are designing an assembly that their Designated Teachers will then share with ALL pupils to reduce stigma and bust myths about the care system. [Read more](#).

The Bright Spots programme, funded by the Hadley Trust, is a partnership between Coram Voice and the Rees Centre.

Events

PROFESSOR JUDITH MASSON, LAW SCHOOL, UNIVERSITY OF BRISTOL

**UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP
BETWEEN THE USE OF CARE AND CARE
PROCEEDINGS**

Webinar: Wednesday 27 May 2020, 12.30-1.45pm



This is a virtual event taking place over Zoom. Please register in advance for a place and to receive instructions for accessing the webinar. Open to all with an interest in the topic.

[Abstract](#)

[Register for webinar with Professor Judith Masson](#)

Blog posts

Why Do I Live With My Carer?

One of the striking findings from the ongoing Bright Spots study, led by Coram Voice with Professor Julie Selwyn at the Rees Centre, is the number of children and young people who feel the reason why they are in care has not been explained.

Julie summarises findings in this recent blog post for ExChange Wales, [Why do I live with my carer?](#)

Young People in Care Must be Heard

Professor Judy Sebba writes for the British Academy's Reframing Childhood Past and Present series on the need to involve care experienced children and young people in the design and improvement of services.

Judy's paper is published by the British Academy on their Medium platform: [Young people in care must be heard](#)

Team News

Welcome to Andrew Brown and Caroline Cresswell

Andrew Brown joins the team as a Research Officer on the [Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools](#). Dr Caroline Cresswell joins the team as a Research Officer for the Hazel Project.

Ellie Suh awarded place on SUCCESS programme

Ellie Suh, postdoctoral research officer at the Rees Centre, has won a place on the SUCCESS programme, aiming to establish a social enterprise that will support the development of the web-based platform for the [Cost Calculator for Children's Services](#) (CCfCS).

The CCfCS is a research-based data analytics tool that helps local authorities to make informed decisions by providing analysis on costs and outcomes of care provided to children in need. Moving to a web-based platform will enhance the functionality and user-friendliness of the CCfCS. It will have more powerful and flexible analytical tools with an intuitive user experience design. Ellie hopes to transform the CCfCS project into a successful and sustainable social enterprise.

The SUCCESS programme is a first-of-its-kind opportunity designed to help social scientists with innovative and marketable research ideas to get the training, support and funding to transform those ideas into a business or social enterprise. The programme is run by ASPECT, a network of Universities looking to make the most of Social Science research through business engagement, licensing and ventures.



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