

# Rees Centre



The Rees Centre Newsletter  
Hilary Term, 2021

**Welcome to the first Rees Centre newsletter of 2021!**

We are delighted to have this opportunity to share this newsletter with you. We plan to send out one of these per term and each newsletter will highlight recent projects and research conducted by our staff and students here in the Centre, as well as inviting you to join us at upcoming events. If you have any feedback or want to suggest ideas for content please do get in touch.

## Research Highlights

### Lifelong Links Evaluation Report

The [Rees Centre](#) was commissioned by the Department for Education in 2017 to carry out the evaluation of **Lifelong Links** as part of the *Children's Social Care Innovation Programme*. Lifelong Links has been developed by [Family Rights Group](#) (FRG) in collaboration with local authorities, children in care and care leavers, families, foster carers and social workers.

*It aims to ensure that a child in care has a positive support network around them to help them during their time in care and into adulthood.* The evaluation found that Lifelong Links had positively impacted the lives of children and young people. Of the objectives set by children and young people at the outset, the analysis indicates that on average 81% of these were met. The evaluation lead, Dr **Lisa Holmes** commented 'our qualitative analysis provides evidence that Lifelong links contributes to children and young

people's sense of identity and their agency, by supporting them to build their own narratives and build safe connections'.



## History of Child Welfare

Coram Story is a project to tell the story of care through the history of Coram and the Foundation Hospital. Honorary Research Fellow at the Rees Centre Prof **Harriet Ward** has been working with colleagues at Coram to identify items to be included on a web timeline with digitised archives. To accompany this Harriet has written short papers tracing the historical antecedents of key issues for children in care: health and wellbeing, education and opportunity, stability, relationships, identity and labels and children's rights. The interactive timeline and the accompanying papers were launched in February 2021 on the [Coram Story website](#).



## Children's Social Care Cost Pressures

In January, the Department for Education published a new report by Dr **Lisa Holmes** setting out the cost pressures facing children's social care and exploring variations in unit costs. Based on the findings from a survey of 13 local authorities, the report highlights the increased demand and budgetary pressures facing local authorities. The report also sets out a series of recommendations, including a review of the Section 251 expenditure data return and the need for costs to be examined within the context of data about the quality of services and placements. Read the full report [here](#).

## Upcoming Events

Public Seminar, Monday 8 March at 17:00

## **Transitions from care to adulthood: persistent issues across time and place**

Professors **Harriet Ward** (Rees Centre) and **Mike Stein** (University of York) are giving a Department of Education Public Seminar on Transitions from care to adulthood. You can access the session [here](#).

The seminar will offer participants an opportunity to hear and discuss the findings from seven papers in a Special Issue of *Child and Family Social Work* (Stein, M. and Ward, H. Eds. (in press). *Young People's Transitions from Care to Adulthood: exploring historical narratives*). The papers present original research into the historical antecedents of policy and practice concerning children leaving out-of-home care (care leavers) in six countries: England, India, Romania, Northern Ireland, Norway and Switzerland.

The seminar has three aims: First, setting the historical context for leaving care policy and practice in six high and middle-income countries over the last 150 years. Second, identifying 'common concerns', including poor outcomes; abuse within care; and systemic injustices. Third, the seminar will introduce 'enduring issues': conflicting perspectives around the purpose of care; concerns about encouraging welfare dependency and abuse, powerlessness and lack of agency. The seminar will conclude with reflections on progress (or lack of it) over time and across cultures.

The Special Issue is due to be published online on 12<sup>th</sup> April and in print on 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.

Webinar: Tuesday 9 March at 16:00

## **Developing school relationship policies: experiences from primary and secondary schools**

Schools are increasingly taking approaches that emphasise the emotional and relational components of learning. One element of this can be the rethinking of traditional behaviour policies, either to make them more sensitive to the diverse needs of young people or to recast them completely as 'relationship policies'. The two speakers in this webinar have gone through the latter process in their schools – one primary and one secondary – and will discuss the process of creating a relationship policy for the school and its impact on

young people, staff and the wider school environment. The webinar is likely to be of interest to school leaders, SENCOs, Designated Teachers and virtual school staff seeking to encourage their local schools to think about how they can promote positive relationships. [Click here](#) for details on how to join. This is part of a series of webinars hosted by the Rees Centre. For more information on the Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Programme in Schools please visit our [project page](#).

## People at the Rees Centre

The Rees Centre welcomed a bumper crop of **new DPhil students** in October, with eight new students starting and joining our existing group of six. Their diverse projects span a wide variety of topic areas, including adoption in families with birth children, trauma-informed schools, life histories of care-experienced adults excluded from school, and intersectionality in therapeutic foster placements. You can find out about more about several of the students and their projects by clicking the links below:

Lisa Cherry: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/lisa-cherry>

Ellen Froustis: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/ellen-froustis>

Jenny Ginger: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/jennifer-ginger>

Amanda Lyons: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/9759>

Lucy Robinson: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/lucy-robinson>

Josie Scammell: <http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/people/josie-scammell>

We hope this research might have a spotlight over the coming months.

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**Julie Selwyn, Professor of Education and Adoption at the Rees Centre, is to be an advisor to two international research projects.** The first working with Professor Christine Gervais (University of Ontario Canada) is examining child to parent violence and aggression in Canadian adoptive families. The second working with Rapid Impact (Melbourne Australia) is reviewing the literature on 'The Potential of Permanent care' for children in state care.

## Recent Publications and Presentations

**Sebba J.** (2020). “*Educational interventions that improve the attainment and progress of children in out-of-home care,*” in Fernandez, E., and Delfabbro, P. (eds). “Child Protection and the Care Continuum: Theoretical, Empirical and Practice Insights.” Routledge.

This book critically examines policy and practice issues of child protection, including the impact of theoretical orientations, policy initiatives and research findings, with a firm emphasis on the ethics and values underpinning child welfare interventions.

**Harrison, N.,** Z. Baker and J. Stevenson (in press). “*Employment and further study outcomes for care-experienced graduates in the UK,*” Higher Education, <https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s10734-020-00660-w>

[Dr Neil Harrison](#) summarises his **research on care leavers and care-experienced young people in higher education**, and what needs to happen in policy and practice terms.

Catch up on previous webinars on **attachment and trauma awareness in schools** on the Rees Centre’s [YouTube channel](#). Recent webinars include a talk from Derbyshire’s Virtual School Assistant Headteacher [Lizzie Watt](#) on the Local Authority’s experience on leading an attachment aware schools programme, and the [findings](#) from the first working paper from the Alex Timpson Programme, which covers data from 24 primary schools who received whole school training in attachment and trauma awareness in 2018 and early 2019.

**Dr Neil Harrison’s** recording for Edge Hill University’s public webinar on 27<sup>th</sup> January entitled “*Care-experienced students in higher education: what we know... and what we don’t*” is available to watch [here](#)

## On the Blog

**New report highlights wellbeing inequality among care leavers.** *What makes life good? Care leaver’s views in their wellbeing*, published by Coram Voice in collaboration with the Rees Centre, has shown significant differences in the experience of care leavers between local authorities in England. [Read](#)

[more here.](#)

**The Rees Centre published the first working paper from the Alex Timpson Attachment and Trauma Awareness in Schools Programme in October 2020. It explores the impact of whole school training in 24 primary schools in England. [Read more here.](#)**

**Care Leavers in Higher Education. New statistics but a mixed picture [Click here to read the full article.](#)**

Would you like your research to feature in a future issue of Social Sciences e-News? Do you have news or announcements to share? Contact us at [communications@education.ox.ac.uk](mailto:communications@education.ox.ac.uk)

Website: [www.education.ox.ac.uk/rees-centre](http://www.education.ox.ac.uk/rees-centre)

Youtube: [www.youtube.com/user/ReesCentre](https://www.youtube.com/user/ReesCentre)

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