

Rees Centre



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We welcome your feedback and suggestions on our work.

Dr Lisa Holmes on the growth of the Centre

The first half of 2019 has been a busy time for the Rees Centre. We are maintaining our focus on foster care related research while expanding our portfolio of projects to reflect a wider remit beyond our original tag line of 'fostering and education'. We work on issues at the interface of education and children's social care and aim to improve the life chances of those who are, or have been supported by children's social care services – particularly children in need (including those in care), adoptive and special guardianship families and care experienced adults.

Our new Deputy Director Dr Neil Harrison, who joined late in 2018, now leads our growing programme of research focused on care leavers. Last month Professor Julie Selwyn and Dr Priya Tah joined the team. Julie is leading the new Hadley Research Programme at Rees, including her Bright Spots work in partnership with Coram Voice and projects relating to adoption. Priya is working on the ESRC funded Paired Reading project with foster carers. We have advertised a number of new posts as we continue to expand the team (see two remaining research officer posts below) and we look forward to welcoming new colleagues throughout the year.

Dr Lisa Holmes, Rees Centre Director and Associate Professor

Research Updates

New Project – Ethics Review of Machine Learning in Children’s Social Care

The **Rees Centre** and **The Alan Turing Institute** have been commissioned by the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care for an ethics review of machine learning in children’s social care. The purpose of the project is to review existing ethical frameworks and assess their applicability to current machine learning practices in the sector as well as to identify specific complexities of children’s social care that would influence the ethics of using machine learning.

The output of the review (expected in Autumn 2019) will be recommendations for the ethical use of machine learning in children’s social care, for example, exploring technical and non-technical solutions to the problems of AI explainability, bias, discrimination, inaccuracy, and poor data quality. The project will include a literature review and engagement with the relevant research communities in the UK and internationally.

[Contact: Lisa Holmes](#)

Findings Published – Bright Spots

The Bright Spots Programme led by Coram Voice and Professor Julie Selwyn have published findings from the Our Lives Beyond Care study: [Care leavers’ views on their wellbeing](#) (pdf)

Centre News

Children’s Social Care Data User Group (CSC-DUG)

Nikki Luke and Lisa Holmes, along with Jenny Woodman (TCRU at UCL) held the second Children’s Social Care Data User Group meeting in March. The group has been set up by Nikki, Jenny and Lisa to provide a forum to share expertise and learning between data users and potential users (academic, practice and policy) and to provide opportunities for collaboration and joint-working between data teams, including users of comparable international data.

Overview of presentations and discussions: see this [Twitter moment](#).

Membership: open to any individual or organisation who is using, or plans to use, children’s social care data collated by the Department for Education (Child in Need data, Looked After Children data or Section 251 social care expenditure data in relation to children’s services). The inaugural event (February 2018) included representatives from a number of academic institutions, as well as local authority data and performance managers, representatives from the Department for Education and other national organisations, such as Ofsted.

To find out more and/or join the group’s mailing list: email rees.centre@education.ox.ac.uk

Response to Timpson Review of School Exclusion

Following publication of the [Timpson Review of School Exclusion](#) and the [Government’s response](#) on 7 May 2019, Deputy Director of the Rees Centre, Dr Neil Harrison said “Edward Timpson’s wide-ranging report on school exclusions has once again highlighted that children in care and children in need are disproportionately likely to be excluded, amplifying the educational disadvantages that they face. We increasingly understand that a vital ingredient in avoiding exclusions is for schools to adopt an attachment and trauma aware approach.” [More](#)

Appointment to Panel of Evaluators

The Rees Centre is a member of the Panel of Evaluators for the What Works Centre for Children's Social Care. [More](#)

In The Media

Neil was interviewed for [Channel Four News](#) on 8 May about care experienced students in higher education.

Ellie Ott discussed support for foster carers on [Radio 4's Women's Hour](#) on 24 May.

Centre Vacancies

Research Officer – vacancy ID 140612

We are looking for a Research Officer to join a small team undertaking studies that focus on cost benefit/effectiveness of services provided to children and families. You will be working alongside the team who developed the innovative [Cost Calculator](#) and are leaders in the field in costing social care.

Closing date: 7 June 2019.

Research Officer – vacancy ID 140819

We are looking for a Research Officer to work alongside Professor Julie Selwyn on a project to evaluate the impact of the Bright Spots Programme on local authorities. Closing date: 21 June 2019.

Please apply for either vacancy via the University of Oxford Online Recruitment Portal:

<https://www.recruit.ox.ac.uk/>

Blog - unaccompanied migrant young people

During May, we have published a series of posts relating to unaccompanied migrant young people: -

[Where should we place unaccompanied refugee children to live?](#)

[Children caring for each other: thinking about separated child migrants](#)

[Education of unaccompanied migrant young people](#)

[What does national data tell us about the education of unaccompanied refugee children in care?](#)

Our next theme for the [blog](#) will be data.

EXTRAS

Interested in children's residential care? Conference: The future of residential care in child protection: addressing therapeutic needs (Oviedo Spain 3-4 October 2019) [More information on registration](#)