

Excluded Lives virtual sessions: ‘School exclusion after COVID-19’

Conveners: *Harry Daniels, Ian Thompson, Hilary Emery, Jill Porter, Alice Tawell and Rachel Condry, Department of Education and Centre for Criminology, University of Oxford*



Context

Excluded Lives is a four year ESRC funded research project working across the four jurisdictions of the United Kingdom looking at the impact of exclusion from school and how more equitable outcomes can be achieved for pupils, their families, and professionals to inform future practice and policy advice. The project is based at the University of Oxford led by Associate Professor Ian Thompson and Professor Harry Daniels.

Purpose and focus of the discussions

The impact of Covid-19 on schools is substantial for practitioners and students. We suspect certain groups of students may become at risk of exclusion as schools re-open. We want to talk to practitioners and professionals in different parts of England to glean an understanding of their perceptions of the situation, how at-risk students might be identified and what support and guidance exists or can be developed to support practitioners (including implications for integrated, cross-professional working) as well as children and families to successfully return to school.

Key questions for the discussions:

1. What are the heightened risks for exclusion as schools restart? Which students are at risk?

Impact on existing at-risk children and groups? Reluctant to return children and families: anxious and volatile. New categories who may become at risk – why, who are they? What are the reasons? Can we identify them in advance?

2. How can we mitigate these risks? Who needs to act, when and how?

How can we contribute to preparing for return to school: enabling schools, other professionals, parents and students to cope better and manage the problems of reintegration for all children? Are there identification techniques and protective strategies we can offer for at-risk groups?

3. What is happening to currently excluded students including where there is no alternative provision?

Who knows about these students? How can this information be accessed? Who is this information shared with? How and to what end?

Outcomes

The discussions will involve practitioners from across education, health, social care and the police. We will draw together the views of the groups into key messages that respond to the questions we have identified and flag other issues that will doubtless emerge. We will then share these key messages with the project's Knowledge Exchange and Advisory Groups to further test and challenge the ideas prior to the publication of a short paper that identifies heightened risks and how they can be identified; sources of support and guidance for professionals and practitioners, families and pupils; and strategies for reducing risk and improving outcomes.