



The Rees Centre Newsletter
April, 2022

Timpson Project Updates

The [Timpson project](#) has published multiple new papers this term! This five year research programme is exploring the impact of 'whole school' attachment and trauma awareness training on experiences and outcomes for vulnerable young people. Over 300 schools across 26 local authorities in England have received training in attachment and trauma, organised through the local virtual school or educational psychology service, often accompanied by follow-on training and networking opportunities. The aim of the Programme is to explore the impact of this training by drawing on the perspectives of staff and young people.

[Working Paper 5](#) summarises questionnaire responses from 112 headteachers whose schools had attachment and trauma awareness training between 2018 and 2021. Nearly all felt that the training had a positive or transformational impact on their school, with staff being more confident. Over three-quarters reported improvements in engagement, learning and attainment for vulnerable pupils, while 81% reported a reduction in the use of sanctions. Headteachers also described a wide range of policy and practice changes in their school including a more empathetic and relational approach and a review of behaviour policies.

[Working Paper 4](#) summarises interviews with the person leading the attachment and trauma awareness programme in 22 local authorities. We found that nearly all felt that the training and support provided to schools had been successful in meeting its aims, and that it was most effective where there was clear communication with schools and active engagement from senior leaders. Many felt that the need for attachment and trauma awareness had increased as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic and most were planning to continue providing training.

[Working Paper 3](#) summarises the attachment and trauma awareness training that we observed across the 26 local authorities participating in the Programme. We found that while the training received by schools varied in the detail, it was academically-robust and generally well-presented. It was more engaging (and potentially effective) where there was ample time for focused discussion around the context of the school; we also noted that many school staff appeared to be especially interested in content around neuroscience and specific strategies for supporting vulnerable pupils.

Recent Research

The Bright Spots Programme

The Bright Spots Programme is a partnership between the Rees Centre and Coram Voice, funded by the Hadley Trust. It supports local authorities to systematically listen to their children in care and care leavers, about the things that are important to



Department for Education

The Evaluation of Regional Adoption Agencies

A four-year evaluation funded by the Department for Education led by Ecorys UK in partnership with the Rees Centre aimed to understand regional adoption agencies (RAAs).

The evaluation focused on the four main improvements intended from the RAA programme (adopter recruitment, reducing unnecessary delay, adoption support and cost efficiencies), alongside any other impacts achieved. The evaluation concluded in December 2021. Recent publications from the Evaluation research team include the final report, a leadership research brief and a research brief on adoption support.

[Read more](#)

them. We have collected over 10,000 care experienced voices through our *Your Life, Your Care* surveys. These '10,000 Voices' give an unprecedented insight into children in care's subjective well-being.

To find out more check out the [Research in Practice Webinar](#) with presentations on findings from Julie Selwyn, Linda Briheim-Crookhall, and Claire Baker. There are many examples of Local Authority innovative practice in response to Bright Spots findings available at the [Practice Bank](#). There is also a [set of reports](#) on what looked after children and young people wrote about their contact arrangements. Upcoming reports include:

Lewis S., Selwyn J. and the Bright Spots team (2022) *Staying connected: looked after children and young people's views on their contact arrangements*. Research Report and Executive Summary.

Lewis S., Selwyn J. Briheim-Crookall L., and the Bright Spots team (2022) *Key findings and recommendations*.

Family Routes: growing up in adoptive and Special Guardianship Families

Ecorys, the Rees Centre, and Ipsos have been appointed by the Department for Education to explore the potential of a seminal study to independently research the needs, experiences and outcomes for children and young people leaving care on Adoption Orders (AOs) and Special Guardianship Orders (SGOs). There is currently limited research around how these two routes to permanence affect children's long-term outcomes as they progress into adolescence and adulthood. The purpose of this new research is to help:

- assess the long-term outcomes for children growing up in adoptive and Special Guardianship families
- support improved outcomes for children by enhancing our understanding of what influences the support needs and outcomes for adoptive families and Special Guardianship families
- identify and support potential practice improvements in Local Authorities (LA), Regional Adoption Agencies (RAA) and Voluntary Adoption Agencies (VAA); and
- support improved decision making by LAs and courts on permanency options for children who cannot return home to live with their birth parents.

Over the course of the research, we hope to follow the lives of young people aged 12-21 growing up in adoptive and Special Guardianship families. The precise approach is to be determined following the initial feasibility study, but could include:

- longitudinal surveys of young people and parents/carers, over multiple waves
- longitudinal qualitative interviews with young people and families
- analysis of case files

- qualitative interviews with stakeholders
- analysis of administrative data held on young people and families.

Centre News



Departmental Seminar Series

Did you miss the the University of Oxford Department of Education's Public Seminar Series *The rights of the Child: Implications for Research, Policy and Practice*? Luckily, you can catch the series on [YouTube](#)!

This seminar series was co-convened by former students of the University of Oxford MSc in Education alongside the Rees Centre director Leon Feinstein. The seminar aimed to illustrate the diversity of the concept of 'the child' in how it pertains to different contexts and disciplines, with a focus on critically examining the effectiveness of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child in current sociopolitical contexts, and how these contextual trajectories can inform present and future strategies for the betterment of the child.



Specialist Adviser

Julie Selwyn has been appointed as a specialist adviser to assist the House of Lords Children and Family Act 2014 Select Committee. The role includes briefing the Chair and the Committee; advising on selection of witnesses; providing possible questions for oral evidence sessions; reading and assessing evidence and assisting with the drafting of the report.

Book Launch

Professor Harriet Ward and Helen Trivedi's book has been officially launched and downloaded over 11000 times! **Outcomes of Open Adoption from Care: An Australian Contribution to an International Debate** was written with two Australian colleagues (Lynne Moggach and Sue Tregeagle) and it can be downloaded [free of charge](#).

Travel Grant

DPhil student [Yousef Khalifa Aleghfeli](#) has won a travel grant for his field work on unaccompanied refugee youth in Greece. The £2,500 grant was awarded by the British Association for International and Comparative Education.

Latest academic publications

Aleghfeli, Y. and Hunt, L. (2022) [Education of unaccompanied refugee minors in high-income countries: Risk and resilience factors](#) Educational Research Review, Volume 35.

Broadhurst, K., Mason, C., & Ward, H. (2022). [Urgent Care Proceedings for New-born Babies in England and](#)

[Wales–Time for a Fundamental Review](#). International Journal of Law, Policy and the Family, 36(1), ebac008.

Lewis, S. (2022). [‘I was putting her first’: Birth parents’ experiences of ‘consent’ to adoption from care in England](#) Child & Family Social Work, 1– 10

Suh, E., & Holmes, L. (2022). [A critical review of cost-effectiveness research in children's social care: What have we learnt so far?](#) Social Policy & Administration, 1– 15.



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