

People

Welcome

New CRFR Associate Directors

We are delighted to welcome Lisa Mcdaid and Matthew Waites to CRFR. Lisa is the programme leader of the Sexual Health Unit at the University of Glasgow. Matthew is a senior lecturer at the University of Glasgow with a particular interest in human rights, sexual orientation and gender identity in international contexts.

CRFR KE Assistant

Charlie Mills recently started at CRFR. Her work focuses on CRFR research briefings and CRFR social media content.

Congratulations

Eric Chen, Sharani Osbourne and Emily Ross are gaining their PhDs.

Tineke Broer has received an IASH bursary which extends her work on neuroscience and also allows her to start research on mental health in academic life.

Goodbye

Sadly, we have to say farewell to Amy Chandler and Kirsten Thomlinson.

Amy has been based at CRFR for a number of years and her presence will be greatly missed. We wish her good luck as she leaves us to take up a lectureship at the University of Lincoln.

As Communication and KE Co-ordinator, Kirsten has been a huge asset to CRFR over the last few years. She is returning to New Zealand with her young family, and while we wish her well in her new life, she will be very much missed.

Special thanks also go to Associate Directors Danny Wight and Nick Watson for the time they have given and contributions made to CRFR.

Publications

Morton, S. (2015) 'Creating research impact: the roles of research users in interactive research mobilisation', *Evidence & Policy: A Journal of Research, Debate and Practice* 11(1): 35-55.

Punch, S. (2015) 'Possibilities for Learning between Childhoods and Youth in the Minority and Majority Worlds: Youth transitions as an example of cross-world dialogue,' in Wyn, J. and Cahill, H. *Handbook of Children and Young Adulthood*, Singapore: Springer.

Punch, S. (2015) 'Exploring Children's Agency across Majority and Minority World Contexts', in Esser, F., Baader, M., Betz, T. and Hungerland, E. *Reconceptualising Agency and Childhood: New Perspectives in Childhood Studies*, London: Routledge.

Parke, A., Sweeting, H. and Wight, D. (in press) Parenting stress and parent support among mothers with high and low education. *Journal of Family Psychology*.

Viry, G. and Kaufmann, V. (Eds) (2015) *High Mobility in Europe: Work and Personal Life*. Palgrave.

Tisdall, E.K.M. (2015) 'Children and Young People's Participation: a critical consideration of Article 12' in Vanderhole, W., Desmet, E., Reynaert, D. and Lembrechts, S. *Routledge International Handbook for Children's Rights Studies*, London: Routledge.

Tisdall, E.K.M. (2015) 'Addressing the challenges of children and young people's participation: considering time and space' in Gal, Tali and Duramy, B. *International Perspectives and Empirical Findings on Child Participation: From Social Exclusion to Child-Inclusive Policies*, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Tisdall, E.K.M. and Davis, J. (2015) 'Children's Rights and Wellbeing: Tensions within the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014' in Smith, A.B. *Enhancing Children's Rights: Connecting Research, Policy and Practice*, Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.

Broer, T. and Pickersgill, M. Targeting brains, producing responsibilities: The use of neuroscience within British social policy. *Social Science & Medicine*, 132(5), 54-61. (open access)



crfr bitesize

Centre for Research on Families and Relationships September 2015



What's new...

How does technology impact on family life?

The advances in technology have been rapid and profound, with our daily lives now marked with beeping phones, computer alerts, online passwords and emails sent via public transport or from home. Despite their constant presence, there have been few opportunities to reflect on the changes these technologies have brought to our personal lives and to family life. Our new project, called Digital Families, will bring together parenting organisations, practitioners and researchers to share what we have already learned and to discuss the main issues facing families in Scotland today.

The project, funded by the Scottish Universities Insight Institute, is centred around three key events, each looking at a different aspect of family life: childhood; family life and parenting; and

older age and caring. The events will consider a range of issues such as how experiences are different for rural and urban families, for transnational families, and across generations; the contributions that digital technologies make to developing and maintaining social networks; the effect they have on education, work/life balance, lifelong learning and wellbeing; and what inequalities arise from having different access to and use of digital technology.

In running these events, we want to find out about the issues that families are grappling with in relation to digital advances and consider how they can be addressed in policy and practice. We are also keen to encourage new collaborations between researchers and academics to address some of these issues and inform policy and practice.

The events will be taking place between October 2015 and February 2016.

For further information go to:

www.crfr.ac.uk/digital-families-across-the-lifecycle/

What is CRFR?

CRFR produces research and commentary on families and relationships. It facilitates a network of researchers, and those interested in families and relationships, to promote the use of research in policy and practice.

To find out more about all CRFR research projects go to www.crfr.ac.uk/projects/current-projects/

CRFR blog exclusive



All over now?

Children's contact when there is domestic abuse

Fiona Morrison, The University of Edinburgh

People used to think domestic abuse was something that only affected adults. However a body of research has shown that simply isn't the case. Children overhear, witness, intervene and deal with the consequences of domestic abuse. A child may call the police following an assault. They may physically intervene to stop an attack. They may become homeless because of domestic abuse. Through research, children have provided their own unique accounts of domestic abuse that have expanded our understanding of how domestic abuse affects children...

please read on at <http://crfrblog.blogspot.co.uk/>



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Critical happiness

**Progressing research impact –
a 'contributions' approach**

Heather Wilkinson wins excellence award



'Challenging conceptions of integration: sharing the findings from a Practitioner Research Programme on Improving the care of older people in Scotland', published in the Journal of Integrated Care, was selected by the journal's editorial team as the Outstanding Paper in the 2015 Emerald Literati Network Awards for Excellence.

It was written by CRFR's co-director Heather Wilkinson and Claire Lightowler and Catherine-Rose Stocks-Rankin from IRISS.

Read the article here: www.emeraldinsight.com/doi/full/10.1108/JICA-04-2014-0015#

Neuroscience and Family Life: The Brain in Policy and Everyday Context



A Policy & Public Engagement Event was held at the beginning of September, where emergent findings from the project were shared with policy makers, social services and the public. People shared their thoughts, hopes and concerns regarding the way neuroscience is used in social policy, social services, and family life.

For more information about this project contact Tineke.Broer@ed.ac.uk

Events/training



We look forward to welcoming you to our 5th international conference, offering delegates opportunities to attend seven streams, skills taster sessions and take part in a dynamic closing session on creating research impact.

The conference will address key questions relating to 'unequal families and relationships' such as:

- How are social divisions and inequalities experienced within the context of families and personal relationships?
- How do inequalities of gender, social class, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and generation, intersect within and between families, households or friendship groups?
- How are families and relationships implicated in sexism, racism and bigotry, as well as political resistance to injustice and encouragement of inclusiveness, fairness and equality?
- What comparisons can we draw between the global north and global south and what are the consequences of national boundaries and immigration policies for unequal families and relationships?

Keynote speakers

Julia Brannen
Thomas Coram Research Unit,
Institute of Education

Kathleen Gerson
New York University

Lynn Jamieson
The University of Edinburgh

Chang Kyung-Sup
Seoul National University

David Morgan
University of Manchester

Peter Moss
University of London

Evelyn Gillan Impact Prize

This prize will be awarded to the best research impact poster presented at the CRFR international conference. It is named after a friend and colleague of CRFR who was an advocate of using evidence to inform her high profile policy influencing work.

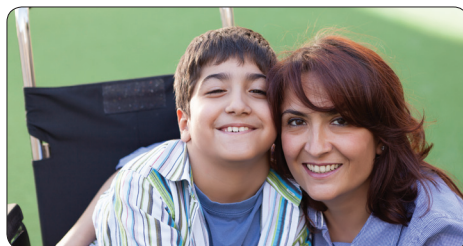
For details of all CRFR events go to www.crfr.ac.uk

Scoping review: Achieving permanence for disabled children

Christine Jones

The University of Edinburgh/NSPCC
Child Protection Research Centre

Children who have been removed from their parents need stability and permanence. This is as true for disabled children as it is for others. Yet many children moving into care are subject to extended periods of uncertainty while decisions are made regarding their future. Throughout the sector there are concerns that disabled children in Scotland wait longer than others for permanency and have a higher turnover of placements. With very little research about adopting or fostering disabled children available in the UK, we need to look for lessons from research elsewhere. In response, researchers at Strathclyde and Edinburgh Universities recently reviewed evidence concerning fostering and adopting disabled children. Ninety texts were



included in the review, including material from the US, the UK, Canada, Australia, China and the Netherlands.

Key findings from the review reveal:

- Disabled children have less chance of a return to home, contact with birth family or kin placement.
- Disabled children may wait longer for adoption but, overall, research shows they have no less chance of being adopted. The exception is children with learning disabilities.
- More information is needed about how to recruit, prepare, match and support carers, with the lack of support being a primary reason carers were put off caring for a disabled child.

Reviewing the registration process of youth football from a rights perspective

Scotland's Commissioner for Children and Young People commissioned research by Carole Ewart with Kay Tisdall, co-director of CRFR, on the current registration process for young people involved in youth football in signing with professional clubs.

The research involved interviews and focus groups with young people to ensure their views were heard, and findings were quoted in a Scottish Parliament debate on 2 June 2014, and will inform the work of the Public Petitions Committee.

CRFR welcomes the University of Dundee to the consortium



We are delighted to welcome Dr Lorraine van Blerk and Professor Divya Jindal-Snape as associate directors for the University of Dundee.

In establishing consortium links with Dundee we have been able to formalise our already productive working relationships in the areas of childhoods, children's rights, life transitions and families.

New projects



CRFR has been commissioned by Move On to conduct an evaluation of their peer mentoring service that works with care-experienced young people. The evaluation, following a contribution analysis model, will inform the future development of the service and provide Move On with opportunities to share their learning about peer mentoring with other interested organisations and individuals.

For more information email: Christina.McMellon@ed.ac.uk

Bookbug

The Scottish Book Trust's Bookbug Programme gifts book bags to every child in Scotland. They also run free song and rhyme sessions across the country. A team at CRFR are working with Scottish Book Trust to assess the impact Bookbug is having on parents, children and early years professionals. The project will run throughout 2015 and 2016 and will involve national surveys of parents and professionals, as well as area based case studies.

For more information email: e.c.davidson@ed.ac.uk



NCRM

A new project for the National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) will explore the feasibility of conducting secondary analysis across existing data from several qualitative longitudinal studies. Using the ESRC Timescapes project data, focusing on the topic of care and intimacy, the research team (University of Southampton and CRFR) aims to explore new procedures for working with multiple sets of qualitative longitudinal data, whilst extending good practice in this emergent, and important, field of research.

For more information about this project go to: <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/>

Practitioner Research: Outcomes and Partnership (PROP 2)

CRFR along with IRISS (Institute for Research and Innovation in Social Services) have been running a practitioner research programme for a number of years. The programme recruits practitioners who are interested in conducting a small research project, and supports and trains them through the process of designing, conducting and writing up their work. This year's practitioner researchers looked at a diverse range of subjects including looking at yoga for people with dementia and building children and young people's networks. (See the full range of projects here <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/prop2/practitioner-researchers/>)

Practitioners learned about planning, conducting and writing up research, and spent some time thinking about how they might use the research in their own work and to influence others. They balanced the everyday pressures of work with a commitment to conducting quality research – no easy task! CRFR and IRISS are proud of their achievement, including some who completed a master's level module in qualitative data analysis.

On 21st July 2015 an event provided the opportunity for the researchers to present their findings and think about how they can use the work to influence change in their workplaces and beyond.

For more information email: stuart.muirhead@iriss.org.uk or go to <http://blogs.iriss.org.uk/prop2/>

Turning the light on male suicide

Amy Chandler, CRFR researcher.

The gap between male and female suicide rates has increased over the last 30 years; currently four out of every five deaths by suicide in the UK are men.

Numerous explanations have been put forward for this, one of which suggests that men are less likely than women to a) share problems with friends; and b) access talking therapies.

A campaign earlier this year aimed to 'inspire' men to open up about their problems and worries; implying that if men stop 'swallowing [their] feelings' and 'just soldiering on regardless' then perhaps there might be fewer suicides. The campaign received a lot of media coverage, was supported by celebrities and included a social media campaign where men were encouraged to name their worries publically.

For many reasons, this type of campaign is to be welcomed. It is refreshing to see distress and suicide being addressed in a non-medical, non-judgemental manner which is aimed at tackling widely held cultural beliefs about men and masculinity. However, there are also a number of concerns about the link between male openness about feelings and high suicide rates. Focusing on talk, for instance, does not necessarily address structural inequalities, or other aspects of masculinities, which might also contribute to the discrepancy between male and female suicide rates.

As part of an on-going pilot study, funded by Alcohol Research UK, Amy has been interviewing men who have experienced suicidal thoughts or actions. Their stories provide some support to the idea that men find it difficult to 'open up' about their worries and problems. However,



participants in the study have also told of thwarted attempts to 'seek help' – where services have not responded or simply not been there.

The worries articulated by (mostly successful, affluent) men in the #switchonthelight campaign concern important issues regarding fear of failure, experiences of panic, feelings of inadequacy. To a certain extent these declarations normalise the discussion of negative feelings among men. However, in contrast, the concerns that emerge for men in the Alcohol Stories study go beyond this. Crucially they include extremely difficult experiences and feelings: job loss, relationship breakdown, prison sentences, abusive interpersonal relationships, suicide attempts and thoughts, dysfunctional family relationships.

These findings raise significant challenges for explanations for male suicide which focus overly on 'talking' and 'open-ness'. Rates of suicide are much higher for men from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, for those who have insecure or no housing, for those who are unemployed. It may be much less possible for men who do not embody 'successful' masculinity via professional status or economic security to 'open up' about their problems in the manner suggested by the #switchonthelight campaign. As such, we need to remain cautiously supportive of such initiatives, maintaining a close eye on the significant structural inequalities which shape problems like male suicide.



Insight Creating Space to learn from Young People's Participation

Mary Mitchell, Senior Officer, Young People's Participation Team, City of Edinburgh Council.

CRFR is pleased to be developing a new partnership with the City of Edinburgh Council's Young People's Participation Team. The team supports young people to inform and recommend policy and service change as part of the implementation of Edinburgh's Young People's Participation Strategy. In a key aspect of this strategy, groups of young people undertake action research about topics that they feel strongly about and find creative ways to share their findings. The young researchers then meet together with relevant decision-makers in a Conversation for Action. Young people present their research and make recommendations on the topic and the whole group together develop an action plan which is monitored

by the team. Recent groups have looked at topics including 'mental health support in schools', 'improving sex education' and 'votes at 16 and political education'.

Using a contribution analysis approach, CRFR will work in partnership with young people and Council staff to identify a theory of change and develop self-evaluation tools for the team. Alongside this work we are applying for funding to undertake an inquiry about young people's experiences of youth-led research. This inquiry will both contribute to evaluation of the team's work and develop resources for academics, practitioners and young people interested in civic participation.