

Cover image: A wordle cloud illustrates the learning of respondents of the Practice Supervisors' Development Programme conference on 4 July 2022. See more details of this event on page 19.

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Welcome

The Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) is an interdisciplinary research centre established in 2015 with strong engagement from practice partners. We have created a supportive intellectual community with public interfaces and extensive local, national and international reach to advance a local, national and international profile and enhance the impact of innovative research and interdisciplinary approaches to social work.

Our aim is to bring together social work scholars, professionals and students to provide a distinctive platform for research and innovation focussing on the changing nature of social relations in social work and other social action interventions.

As an innovation and research centre, CSWIR aims to:

- promote social justice, rights and inclusion
- support protection and development of vulnerable populations under new global conditions of austerity and inequality
- strengthen the re-articulation of social work as a distinctive mode of collaborative and participatory relationship-based social action.

In CSWIR, we benefit from cross-disciplinary local, national, and international collaborations and links, and aim to extend and advance our partnerships with scholarly, professional, and governmental bodies.

As we compile our Annual Report, it feels extraordinary that another year has passed. These past 12 months have seen us slowly moving out of the acute phase of the global pandemic. Yet the pandemic continues to influence our practices. It has certainly not disappeared, and its impact on how we

conduct our lives - professionally and personally - undoubtedly has generated irrevocable changes that we are still seeking to make sense of and adjust to.

The uncertainty that the pandemic generated for us all has been one of two themes that CSWIR has engaged with over the past year. The second is 'decolonisation' which we co-create the opportunity to participate in a caring, critical discussion of social justice issues and professional practice with students, community members, service users, academics, knowledge keepers and practitioners in a safe environment of guided self-care and trust.

These themes were the result of discussions with our Advisory Board in 2021, and we have concentrated our efforts on building our model of co-production and participation with experts-by-experiences, practitioners, stakeholders, postgraduate researchers and academic staff, into all our activities. The concrete evidence of this work is in our new expanding international collaborations with colleagues in Australia, Spain and Finland, and our newly co-created podcast series, co-created postgraduate researcher community, and public engagement seminars. Some of these fruits are visible in this report. We hope it is a nourishing read!

The CSWIR Team

It continues to be a genuine privilege to co-lead CSWIR, alongside Dr Henglien Lisa Chen (co-director) and with the exceptional support of our Research Associate, Avanka Fernando.

Working as a team is a powerful reminder of how much more can be achieved when we work together, making a connection with the African proverb from which we've taken an abbreviation for our report cover: *"If you want to go fast, go alone. If you want to go far, go together"*.

During 2021-22, alongside our focus on the themes of uncertainty and decolonisation, referred to above, we have concentrated our efforts on building our model of co-production and participation into all of our activities.

The concrete evidence of this work is in our new expanding collaborations with colleagues in Australia, Spain and Finland detailed below.

Over the past year, Dr Henglien Lisa Chen, CSWIR Co-Director, has continued to make an invaluable contribution to developing CSWIR's profile as a truly participatory centre for national and international social work innovation and research. Lisa's interests in collaborative approaches to decolonising the social work curriculum have been at the centre of her CSWIR related work in the past 12 months and features throughout the report.

Professor Gillian Ruch

Co-Director of CSWIR
Professor of Social Work
Department of Social Work & Social Care
School of Education & Social Work
University of Sussex



Dr Henglien Lisa Chen MA/Dip, PhD

Co-Director of CSWIR
Senior Lecturer in Social Work
Department of Social Work & Social Care
School of Education & Social Work
University of Sussex



It's been fantastic to work for CSWIR this year and to meet some of the amazing members in person! Not only have I been able to meet and work with people engaged in innovative research and practice, but I've been encouraged to actively engage in CSWIR supported research.

Exciting developments over the past year have included launching the CSWIR podcast series, and getting involved with the Kitbag project.

With Gillian's leadership and guidance from Dr Margaret Hannah (International Futures Forum), I was able to facilitate the introduction of Kitbag into Sri Lanka through the National Child Protection Authority. I also had the opportunity to engage with the MobMAG project with Lisa Chen where headway is being made to co-create technological platforms to enhance the mobility of adults.

Being at CSWIR has helped me to learn the value of working in a very diverse community, and the importance of social work in an ever-changing, complex world.

Avanka Fernando
Research Assistant, CSWIR



CSWIR communications and publications are made possible through the exemplary work of Heather Stanley, the School of Education and Social Work's Communications Officer.

Her guidance and advice in keeping the CSWIR website and social media platforms current and up to date and her brilliant work in designing the CSWIR Annual Report have been integral to our internal and external communications - and successful functioning of CSWIR.

Heather Stanley
Communications Officer
School of Education and Social Work



CSWIR Partners

CSWIR partners include academics, practitioners, carers, care providers, and service users from around the world.

As part of our commitment to a participatory model for the Centre, this year we made the decision to reconfigure our structures by transforming our Advisory Group into a more inclusive Partnership Group that involves all CSWIR members. We are very grateful to the members of our Advisory Group and look forward to their contribution to the work of CSWIR as a member of the Partnership Group.

Our heartfelt gratitude to over 300 CSWIR members and the general public locally, nationally and internationally who have actively engaged and been involved with CSWIR events, knowledge exchange and/or co-creation.

Our international partnership with colleagues in SWIRLS at the University of Flinders in Adelaide, Australia, has made a very promising start with numerous activities being co-produced. In addition, two new international collaborations have taken off this year. Firstly, we are delighted to be partnering with a multidisciplinary team of colleagues related to social work and social care research, teaching and practice at the University of Complutense - Madrid in Spain (Universidad Complutense de Madrid). Secondly, we are delighted to be partnering with the University of Helsinki and their recently launched Centre for Practice Research.

Details of activities we have engaged in with our partners are as follows:

PARTNERSHIP GROUP ANNUAL MEETING

Our first Partnership Group Annual Meeting convened in July 2022 with a focus on the co-creation of an agenda for CSWIR's programme for 2022-23.

The meeting was a conducive space with a strong underlying theme for the coming year of the importance of 'connection'.

As we continue to ensure that our working agenda is in alignment with the priorities and vision of the School's '[Strategic Framework for Research with Impact \(2019-25\)](#)', areas for focus in the coming year were identified as:

- The long-term effects of the pandemic and specifically how it affects social workers and academics - including the complexity and difficulty of social work in the current Covid-19 context, and the issues of loss (including social workers leaving the profession). Also the emotions related to these experiences.
- Cross-national approaches and international knowledge exchange about poverty, community, decolonising knowledge regarding research and practice, myth-busting, and adopting an international perspective.
- Wellbeing, poverty, digital poverty and the intersection of these two in digital poverty.
- Conflict related social work (carried on from 2020-21).

As we construct a plan for the coming year, we will ensure it adheres to our commitment to participatory, dialogical and inclusive practices in the design and delivery of these events.

THE CSWIR DOCTORAL COMMUNITY

CSWIR supports Doctoral Researchers in the Department of Social Work and Social Care undertaking research as part of their PhD course.

Postgraduate researchers are an integral part of CSWIR's events and activities, and we aim to provide various opportunities for them to engage in a wide range of research-related events, including knowledge exchange and impact activities.

This year we have greatly appreciated the researchers who have provided thought-provoking spaces for the School, the doctoral community, and the public to engage in. A description of PGR led activities is given in the section 'Co-Create Postgraduate Community' on page 24.

Recently completed Doctoral Researchers:

- **Claire Durrant**
Research theme:
"I didn't want to face another day of failing": The Emotional Wellbeing of Young People with Severe Dyslexic Difficulties in State Mainstream Education:
Social and discursive constructions.
- **Sushri Sangita Puhan**
Research theme:
Illuminating Adoptive Family Practices in India: A narrative analysis of policy and lived experience.
- **Jenny Hewitt**
Research theme:
Exploring Young People's Socio-politics in Everyday Life.
- **Emma Soye**
Research theme:
Difference and Encounter: Psychosocial support and secondary education for young migrants and refugees in the UK.

Current Doctoral Researchers:

- **Jo Williams**
Research theme:
Below the Horizon of Supervision:
Exploring the psychosocial world of the social work supervisor.
- **Amy Lynch**
Research theme:
Exploring Social Workers' Understandings and Experiences of 'Empathy' in Relationships with Parents in Child Protection Services.
- **Anna Hutchings**
Research theme:
A Gendered Landscape: Exploring the experiences of female social workers and young male clients in the context of Child Sexual Exploitation and Harmful Sexual Behaviours.
- **Felipe Parades Ramos**
Research theme:
Care Leavers Experiences of Transitions in Chile: A qualitative longitudinal research
- **Odi Oquosa**
Research theme:
'When is a Dolphin not a Dolphin?'
British imperial and colonial monuments and symbols: A key to understanding the psyche of Britain's institutions, and the creation of new knowledge and healing for collective wellbeing.
- **Shantel Thomas**
Research theme:
Dismantling White Privilege in Social Work: What can an auto-ethnographic study contribute to the understanding of issues of race and leadership in white led organisations?
- **Jessica White**
Research theme:
Inclusivity in Digital Learning: A dialogic approach to developing metacognitive knowledge in a digital learning context

New Doctoral Researchers:

CSWIR was delighted with the successful application of Jonathan Woolgar for the highly competitive ESRC doctoral scholarship scheme, administered through the South East Network for Social Sciences. Jonathan will begin his doctoral research in autumn on the theme of whether and how safeguarding policies in schools, relating to peer-on-peer abuse and harmful sexual behaviours, are changing in response to the publicised experiences and perspectives of the young people who have experienced it.

Jonathan's supervisors will be CSWIR members, Professor Michelle Lefevre and Dr Kristine Hickle.



Doctoral researchers and supervisors in the Department of Social Work and Social Care at the 'Many Minds' data analysis workshop

Research Highlights

CSWIR members continue to engage in research which aligns with the University's Research Strategy 2019-25 - and the School of Education and Social Work's vision for research.

Research carried out by CSWIR members aims to:
Make a difference to policy, practice and lived experience;
Inform a critical and rigorous approach to knowledge production;
Engage actively with practitioners, carers, care providers and service users who have a stake in the work of the CSWIR;
Build the research capacity of students and practitioners through co-production activities.

THE INNOVATE PROJECT

As part of the four-year ESRC funded [Innovate Project](#), the Transitional Safeguarding Strand team, Professor Gillian Ruch, Dr Jeri Damman, Dr Nathalie Huegler (Sussex) and Dr Susannah Bowyer (Research in Practice), is looking at Transitional Safeguarding (TS) as an approach to change systems, services and practices to better respond to the needs of young people experiencing extra-familial risks and harm beyond the family home - such as sexual or criminal exploitation, serious youth violence and peer-on-peer abuse - as they transition to adulthood.

Since the beginning of 2021, the team has been looking at TS developments in two sites: the London Borough of Hackney and Sheffield. During the first phase of fieldwork, data collection activities had to be managed around the challenges of the pandemic. As a consequence, almost all interviews were conducted online by key stakeholders within

the sites, with national TS briefs, and with online observations of meetings relating directly to TS developments - such as bespoke TS Task and Finish groups - or that were relevant to TS issues - for example the Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) forums run within Children's Services.

The second phase of fieldwork (July-Dec 22) will see a continuation of these activities with an additional focus on exploring national policy developments in TS systems and practices, and on accessing the views of young adults experiencing the transition from children's to adult services - or who have recently completed the transition process.

Early paper from the TS team:
Huegler, N. and Ruch, G. (2022): 'Risk, Vulnerability and Complexity: Transitional Safeguarding as a Reframing of Binary Perspectives', *Practice*, 34:1, 25-39.

Further papers are expected to be published from spring 2023.



Members of the Innovate Project at the European Social Work Conference in Amsterdam: April 2022

CHILDRENS' VOICE AND DATA

High quality, and meaningful information can improve professional practice in the lives of vulnerable children and families. But at present, children's information and its use fall far short. Administrative data are collected and often kept in silos; they don't reflect well children and families' experiences and needs, still less their voices or the voices of professionals working with them; and the ethical use of children's information is a serious and growing public concern.

Professor Elaine Sharland, Dr Liam Berriman, Professor Gillian Ruch (all Social Work & Social Care), Professor Lisa Holmes, Dr Perpetua Kirby (both Education) and newly appointed Research Fellow, Dr Caitlin Shaughnessy (Social Work & Social Care), are delighted to have started work (in October 2021) on a 5-year research project which aims to transform how information about and from children and families is gathered, interpreted and used in child and family social policy, services and practice, at local and national levels.

This ambitious programme is funded by the largest single project award – £2.8 million - that the Nuffield Foundation has ever made. Led by Professor Leon Feinstein (Rees Centre, University of Oxford), we are also working in partnership with the London School of Economics, University College London, and Manchester Metropolitan University. We are collaborating too with Greater Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, North Yorkshire and Hampshire local authorities to build their capacity and understanding about how to make better use of information, improve children and families' services, and in turn improve their lives. We'll also be working with wider network of local authorities nationally to extend and support sustainable learning and change.

Our project will focus on children and families who are more vulnerable or disadvantaged and need additional support from local services. Sussex project members are leading in particular on 'Voice'.

From start to finish, we'll be working with children, young people, parents and carers, as well as professionals and policymakers, to foreground their voices within administrative information, and to co-design and shape how children's information can be used ethically and effectively. We don't yet have a confirmed project title and there's a good reason for this: we're busy consulting with children, and families about what name makes best sense to them. We'll announce it with a formal launch in October 2022.

Meanwhile, we've been working hard with local sites in what we are calling the 'Discovery Phase' of the project, to identify where in particular to focus their initial 'information use projects'. In two sites the spotlight will be on improving the use of data and voice to meet the needs of vulnerable children within the first two years of life. In the third site, we'll be supporting better use of data and voice to improve experiences and outcomes for care leavers. In the fourth site we will look to enable more effective targeting of early help for teenagers on the edge of social care. By the end of the Discovery Phase, we hope to have 'mapped' existing data and voice resources and practices in each of these areas - and co-produced 'theories of change' to set the foundations for each site to try out their information use project in the next phase of the project.

There are many hurdles to negotiate along the way – not least grappling with all the ethical and data protection complexities before we're approved to engage and collaborate fully with children, families and practitioners. It's an exciting journey and we're delighted to be on our way!

You can keep up with our progress on the [Nuffield website](#). There will also be blogs, podcasts and communications aplenty to come.

Professor Elaine Sharland

Professor of Social Work Research
Department of Social Work and Social Care
School of Education and Social Work
University of Sussex



CO-DESIGNING MOBILITY METRICS FOR/ AND ACTIVE AGEING CAPTURED ON A DIGITAL PLATFORM

Dr Henglien Lisa Chen is the co-lead, together with Dr Khalid Ali (Brighton and Sussex Medical School), on the MobMAG research project. Avanka Fernando is the Research Assistant. The project is a collaboration with ExtraCare independent living providers, Cush Health Ltd digital developer, with academic support from Sheffield Hallam University. It is funded by UKRI, ESRC IAA, Business Engagement Fund and HIFE BSMS.

The project starts with an understanding of how mobility relates to the wellbeing of senior citizens. It adopts the WHO model of age-friendly cities and engaging with older people, recognising that their environment, service providers (e.g. ExtraCare) and digital developers (e.g. Cush Ltd) are significant factors in co-developing a sustainable, meaningful digital platform to enhance active ageing.

Co-developing a person-centred understanding of what matters to older people will build trust in the design of the product and enable understanding of the impact of mobility and the wide range of benefits from physical activity and exercise for all those involved in the process (e.g. senior citizens, care provider, digital developer and researchers).

The project will apply a participatory approach to co-design a digital platform which is meaningful to senior citizens when it comes to moving more, within their daily routine, with others that live around them and supported by their community.

The project aims to enable the digital developer and supported living providers to understand the fundamental requirements of a community-based digital approach supporting a healthier lifestyle in later life.

CO-CREATE DECOLONISING SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND PRACTICE PROJECTS

The 'Co-create Decolonising Group' was established in 2021 by CSWIR Co-Director, Dr Henglien Lisa Chen with colleagues from England, Finland, India, Israel, Poland, Sweden and SWIRLS Members in Australia.

This collaborative network has led to funding awarded by the [Nordic Summer University](#) for Nordic Study Circle, the EASSW for cocreation projects, and an application to the IASSW for projects with a global social work focus, and materials to support social work practice.

The group is expanding and there are more collaboration activities planned.



Dr Henglien Lisa Chen with colleagues in a co-create session

Photo on right:

Facebook post shared by the Association for mutual support in mental distress, 'Most' in Vitez, Central Bosnia. It shows survivor researcher, Halida Vejzagić, with two members of the Association who took part in the study. The post reads: "In organisation by the University of Sussex, City University London, and the CPI Foundation, we took part today in a study entitled 'Madness after extreme events: Co-production of understanding of mental distress in the context of political conflict, natural disasters and the global pandemic. Vitez, Centre for Community Mental health, 25 March 2022.

MADNESS AFTER THE WAR: CHALLENGING DOMINANT UNDERSTANDINGS OF DISTRESS CAUSED BY EXTREME EVENTS

Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic continues her work in Bosnia and Herzegovina thanks to a grant by the British Academy. The participatory study is co-produced with mental health system survivor researcher, Halida Vejzagić, from the CPI Foundation in Sarajevo. It enables Halida and Rea, in partnership with Dr. China Mills (City University London) to continue their exploratory work on experiential (as opposed to professional) knowledge of distress caused by extreme events - such as the war, the Covid-19 pandemic and the floods of 2014.

Following the pilot in Tuzla and Sarajevo (funded by the Independent Social Research Foundation), the study is now expanded to a further nine locations across Bosnia and Herzegovina.

In testament to the challenge the study presents to the power relations in knowledge production in health and social care research, participants from Association Most in Vitez, Central Bosnia, [posted about their participation in the study on social media](#) illustrating their pride in taking part.



UG Most Vitez
25 Mar · 🌐

U organizaciji University of Sussex, Gradskog Univerziteta u Londonu, Britanske Akademije za nauku i suradnju, te CPI Fondacije - za zastupanje građanskih prava; danas je provedeno istraživanje na temu: "Ludost nakon ekstremnih događaja, koprodukcija razumijevanja duševne nevolje u kontekstu političkog konflikta, prirodnih nepogoda i globalne pandemije.", Vitez - CMZ, 25.03.2022 g



THE KITBAG PROJECT

Putting Kitbag to Work: Promoting the social and emotional wellbeing of children who have experienced trauma

Professor Gillian Ruch is the lead partner in a collaboration with International Futures Forum (IFF) to introduce and support the use of IFF's Kitbag in social work practice. Funded by What Works Centre for Children's Social Care (WWCSC) 'Putting Kitbag to Work' aims to equip and support social workers and foster carers with Kitbag - a resource designed specifically to promote emotionally literate relationships between children, professionals and carers – and evaluate its impact. CSWIR was responsible for the intervention and WWCSC undertook the evaluation. Kitbags were distributed to four local authorities in England and allocated to social workers in children and family teams, family support workers and foster carers. Joint online sessions between Gillian and her IFF counterpart, Dr Margaret Hannah, introduced Kitbag, encouraged its use and provided a space to reflect on their experiences. Typical comments during these online sessions included thoughts about using the various resources within Kitbag with children, seeing it as a useful "conversation starter".

Six months into the project, Gillian and Margaret hosted a learning event involving senior managers and staff who were using Kitbag regularly. They reflected on the value of Kitbag in direct practice, foster care and within their organisations. In direct practice, people were noticing how Kitbag was "*a great opener and fun as well*". It was also popular with children with one practitioner saying they "*expect me to turn up with a Kitbag now*". Importantly, the depth and quality of conversation was changing with "*the child's voice much deeper now*".

One of the surprises in the intervention was the level of enthusiasm expressed by foster carers for Kitbag who described children loving the elements within it. They noticed how Kitbag quickly became a part of everyday life, normalising the expression of feelings on a daily basis.

Senior managers involved in the work spoke of how Kitbag was being used in various ways across their organisations – for example in supervision sessions, preparing for OFSTED inspections, staff conferences, and to slow down conversations to diffuse "prickly situations". Four months later, a further reflection with senior managers noted how Kitbag use was becoming embedded. They recognised it had taken a long time getting the work going, but that it was now taking off.

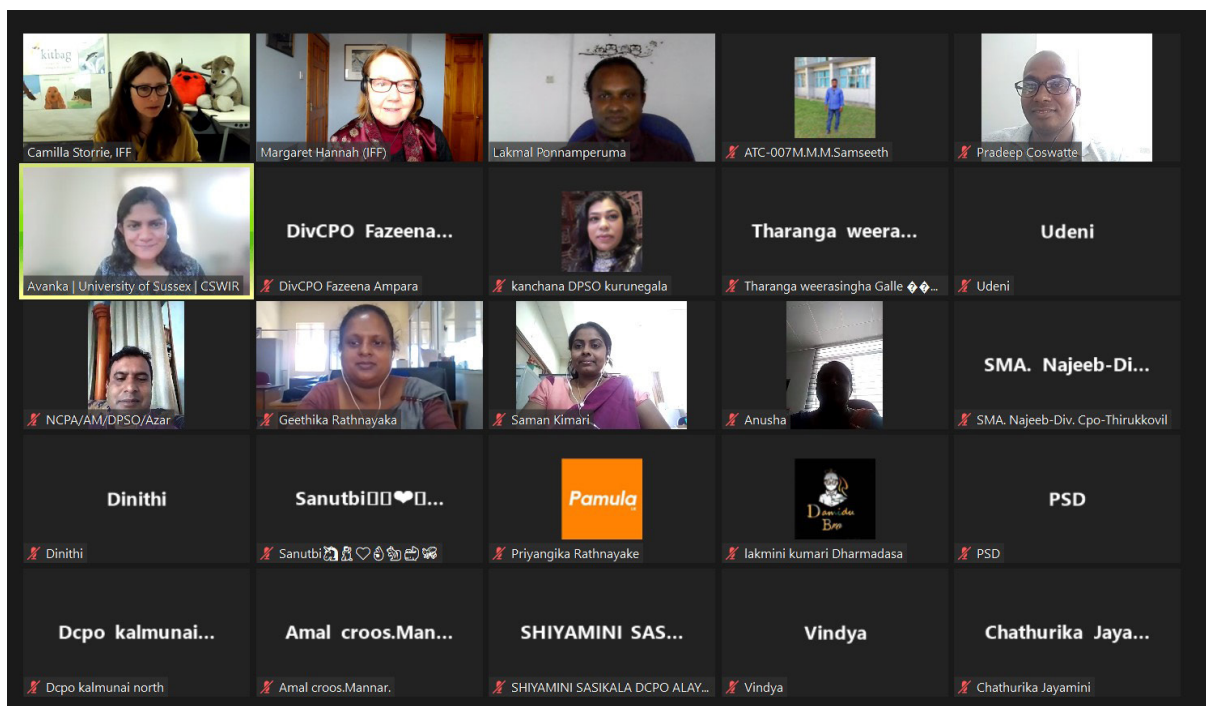
Whilst the evaluation report is still awaited, the intervention team has been impressed at how using Kitbag has generated small but meaningful benefits for children, families and the social work/care workforce. Kitbag can both enrich and improve practice and the relationships between children, their carers and professionals, and enhance workforce morale and organisational cultures.

National Child Protection Authority, Sri Lanka

One surprising development from the Kitbag project was a request by the National Child Protection Authority of Sri Lanka to introduce Kitbag to their team of psychosocial practitioners. A pilot using the current version of Kitbag is underway, with a plan to translate the resource and develop a local capability for producing Kitbags for the NCPA and other children, family and support agencies.

Dr Margaret Hannah

Director, International Futures Forum



Screenshot of the IFF Zoom-based training session for NCPA team members

Kitbag Project in Sri Lanka

This year, CSWIR spearheaded a collaborative project between International Futures Forum and the National Child Protection Authority in Sri Lanka for the purpose of introducing the Kitbag to the Sri Lankan context.

An informal conversation among three friends, former batchmates at the University of Colombo - Avanka Fernando (CSWIR), Geethika Rathnayake and Chaturika Bandara (NCPA) - about improving child protection in Sri Lanka sparked a more serious discussion in December 2021/January 2022 with Lakmal Ponnampereuma (NCPA Psychosocial Director), Gillian Ruch (CSWIR Director) and Margaret Hannah (IFF Executive Director). These discussions highlighted the need for research-based psychosocial tools to improve communication and psychosocial wellbeing of children and child protection workers in Sri Lanka. Kitbag was subsequently introduced to the NCPA team.

It was truly amazing to see so many NCPA team members attend Kitbag training, despite the numerous challenges they were facing and daily power outages in Sri Lanka!

CSWIR is currently collaborating with IFF and NCPA Sri Lanka to adapt Kitbag for the Sri Lankan sociocultural context and to translate the material into Sinhala and Tamil, the two national languages.

CSWIR also looks forward to forging a research collaboration in Sri Lanka in the future.

Avanka Fernando

CSWIR Research Assistant

THE NATIONAL CHILD PROTECTION AUTHORITY IN SRI LANKA AND THE KITBAG PROJECT

The National Child Protection Authority (NCPA) of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka (NCPA) was established in 1998 by a special act of parliament (No.50, 1998). The authority is responsible for implementing national policy by coordination and monitoring stakeholders on prevention, protection and treatment of children victims of abuse. The Psychosocial Division of NCPA devises activities aimed at preventing violence against children and responding to children who are victims of violence.

In order to strengthen its activities, the NCPA has been collaborating with the CSWIR and the International Futures Forum since January 2022. Through the collaboration, the IFF donated 10 Kitbag packages, 10 mini Kitbags and two 1-hour training sessions for NCPA

psychosocial and child protection officers. Training was conducted on 26 April and 12 May 2022 for 56 NCPA District Psychosocial Officers and Divisional Child Protection officers who commented that Kitbag was highly useful as it helped both children and officers to express themselves without words. It was also said to be useful for regulating the emotions of officers and children.

The NCPA is taking further steps to adapt Kitbag within the Sri Lankan context with the supervision of IFF and CSWIR.

Lakmal Ponnampereuma

Psychosocial Director

National Child Protection Authority Sri Lanka



NCPA team members practicing with the Kitbag

International Collaborative Partnerships

THE CSWIR-SWIRLS COLLABORATION

CSWIR and the Social Work Innovation Research Living Space (CSWIR-SWIRLS) collaboration began in 2020-21 and has taken off in exciting ways in the course of the past year. The beautiful illustration below are from a SWIRLS briefing. Produced by Professor Sarah Wendt and SWIRLS colleagues, they illustrate Sarah's vision for the partnership.

SWIRLS and CSWIR

June 2021

Partnership Report 2021-2022

REPORT

From SWIRLS Director

Professor Sarah Wendt
reflections 2021-2022

Partnership Aims

SWIRLS and CSWIR
Partnership Aims

Activities

Collaboration activities
2021-2022



About SWIRLS and CSWIR

Social Work Research Centres

The Social Work Innovation Research Living Space (SWIRLS) and the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) specialise in social work research and innovation. The SWIRLS and CSWIR partnership was established to co-create collaborative international social work and social care research and innovation links and networks.

SWIRLS is located within the College of Education, Psychology and Social Work at Flinders University, South Australia.

CSWIR is located within the School of Education and Social Work at the University of Sussex, UK.

This report celebrates SWIRLS and CSWIR research collaboration activities in its first year of partnership 2021-2022.



Social Work
Innovation Research
Living Space



Reflections 2021-2022

Professor Sarah Wendt, Director SWIRLS



I am delighted to report upon the collaboration activities facilitated by our partnership with the Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR) in 2021-2022. Upon reflection we have achieved much in a

relatively short time. Since establishment of our partnership in June 2021, we have gained significant momentum, sharing knowledge and collaborating through public lectures, research groups and conversations. The global pandemic created a set of unique challenges, but together we have continued to progress our activities during this time of uncertainty. I would like to sincerely thank CSWIR for their generosity of time and commitment to our partnership aims. Our partnership aims have been central to our activities in promoting knowledge from, and to, practice, research and lived experience. We look forward to continuing to work alongside CSWIR to build collaborations and networks that make a real impact to improve social work practice, policy and education.

I am pleased to share our partnership activity highlights 2021-2022 in the following report.



CSWIR-UCM COLLABORATION

CSWIR and the University Complutense of Madrid, Spain (CSWIR-UCM) co-created collaboration planning began in May 2022. The collaboration aims for cross-institutional collaboration on research, postgraduate researcher knowledge exchange, international seminars, online seminars and teaching innovation. We are looking forward to developing a range of events with UCM in the coming academic year.

HELSINKI PRACTICE RESEARCH CENTRE, UNIVERSITY OF HELSINKI, FINLAND

In April, along with Professor Ilse Julkenen and other Finnish colleagues from the University of Helsinki, Professor Gillian Ruch was a keynote speaker at the launch of the [University of Helsinki's Practice Research Centre](#).

The event marked an important moment in the evolution of practice research in Finland. Having previously been located in two centres outside of the University - the Finnish speaking Heikki Waris and the Swedish speaking Mathilda Wrede institutes - the amalgamation of practice research activities under the auspices of the University underlines the seriousness with which practice research is regarded in the Finnish context and the vital importance of the academe-practice interface.

Located within the Faculty of Social Sciences and discipline of social work at the University of Helsinki, the mission of Helsinki Practice Research Centre (HPRC) is to promote wellbeing, participation and equality. We do this by producing practice relevant social work research together with various stakeholders, and by supporting the use of research in practice.

HPRC builds on the Finnish-speaking Heikki Waris and Swedish-speaking Mathilda Wrede Institutes' 20-year long focus on practice research in social work. HPRC integrates research conducted in these two institutes via a new research environment that operates in three languages.

The centre continues the institutes' long-term academic-practice-collaborations and aims to advance practice research both in Finland and internationally.



Speaking about 'The Web that has no Weaver: Exploring the importance of university-community collaboration', Gillian reflected on the organic - and sometimes invisible - ways in which practice research collaborations develop and activities are delivered. The inspiration for the talk's title came from a consultation Gillian had with practice colleagues involved in the Practice Research Hub - part of the local South Coast Region Social Work Teaching Partnership. Anna Bouch, a senior practitioner in Brighton and Hove Adult Services, came up with the title which comes from Chinese medicine and said:

"The idea is that the Weaver is what joins us all together, what makes us more than the sum of our parts, bridges the separatist narratives and false dichotomies between university or academic work and community work. The Weaver is somehow a person as well as a shared space where we make that work happen. You know those moments in discussion where the light catches the words? It's almost like the Weaver is the unknown facilitator in the room, grounding us in shared purpose. The Weaver is facilitated by knowing how we interact with those spaces, not by defining tasks..."

In responding to the invitation, Anna provided a vivid example of how the collaborative practice that underpins practice research and CSWIR should work.

Practice Research

SOUTH COAST SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP PRACTICE RESEARCH HUB WORKSHOPS

In January and May 2022, CSWIR Co-Director, Professor Gillian Ruch facilitated practice research workshops under the auspices of the South Coast Social Work Teaching Partnership. The workshops were delivered to adult, children and families social workers at East Sussex County Council to explore how social work assessment and decision-making practices are shaped by evidence-informed thinking.

Barriers to transparently using a research-informed approach were explored, with the thorny issue of cross examination and resultant challenge of the social work assessment in court contexts, featuring high on the list. Children and families practitioners spoke openly of their concerns that in citing the research evidence they use it will be challenged, resulting in their assessment being discredited and the desired outcome for children not being achieved.

Practitioners were introduced to frameworks to assist their identification of 'gold standard' research methods, with a 'walk through' of the TAPUPAS 'lite' approach to aid development of their critical appraisal skills. Social workers were encouraged, through use of this framework, to build a 'library' of gold standard research to aid their professional thinking and decision-making, and to share their personal 'library' within their services and teams.

Feedback from social workers who participated in the training demonstrated that their fundamental knowledge of what constitutes 'gold standard' research methods is sound, and the training served as a well-pitched refresher and forum to discuss ideas. Participants especially felt encouraged to continue to draw on research to add further weight to their assessments and court statements.



Continuing Professional Development

INTERNATIONAL CONTINUING PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT COURSE FOR THE INTERNATIONAL FEDERATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS: 'EDUCATING FOR PEACE: SOCIAL WORK IN THE CONTEXT OF WAR AND CONFLICT'

In collaboration with [Professor Vasilios Ioakimidis](#), and on behalf of the Social Services in the Context of Conflict Network, Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic (Social Work & Social Care) led on the development and implementation of this innovative CPD programme for the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW). It is the first of its sort for the IFSW and unique in its leadership by people who experienced political conflict themselves - rather than international stakeholders interested in war and conflict.

Six weekly sessions included two groups of presentations. The first included research and reflection from social work academics, practitioners, and service users from war-affected contexts across the globe (Bosnia and Herzegovina, Colombia, Cyprus, Israel, Liberia, Nepal, Northern Ireland). It covered a range of topics on experiences during the conflict and in relation to post-war reconstruction of social services. The second part of the programme covered topics of refugee support and integration through social services, with experiences and research from Cyprus, Ireland, the UK (general refugee support and experiences), Kenya (support for child soldiers), and Romania (in relation to Ukrainian refugees).

All sessions were recorded and are available on the [IFSW's CPD programme website](#). Currently, the Social Services in the Context of Conflict network includes members from war-affected countries in Europe. The CPD programme was an initial activity aimed at expanding the Network membership to other countries across the globe, in collaboration with the IFSW.

THE PRACTICE SUPERVISORS' DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMME

Over the past four years, CSWIR Co-Director, Professor Gillian Ruch and several CSWIR members (Dr Jeri Damman, Jo Williams, Dr May Nasrawy and Dr Louise Sims) have been involved in a variety of ways with the successful delivery of the Practice Supervisors' Development Programme (PSDP). This Department of Education-funded initiative was delivered by a consortium led by Research in Practice, with the University of Sussex having a lead consortium role. The programme has provided continuing professional development to first time practice supervisors across England.

Over 2000 participants have benefitted from the programme, which has been underpinned by relational and reflective approaches to leadership and management and an overarching commitment to addressing equality, diversity and inclusivity issues in supervisory and management practice. The evaluation of the whole programme, led by CSWIR member Dr May Nasrawy with Gillian Ruch, has reported on unequivocally positive feedback from participants. Examples overleaf.

“This course enabled me to reflect upon my beliefs and ways of working, and enabled me to question who I wanted to be as a manager - and how best to enable others to achieve better outcomes for families and children.”

“One of the biggest things for me was around diversity. Our authority is predominantly white, so I never had that space to think about and reflect on my own practice and assumptions. But most importantly, the training made me aware that sometimes people react because they are experiencing inequality which is embedded in some systems.

And although we are trying to change that, I learnt how to be aware of it when supervising my team - How to be supportive, to give them time to debrief, and allow a safe space for us to reflect together and be honest. For me, I saw that once I was aware of that and had changed my supervision practice to be more reflective and relational, I could see that this had an impact on my staff and their work. This means it will also have a positive impact on the children and families we work with.”



The PSDP Consortium celebrating 4 years of delivery of a highly successful CPD programme to social workers in England

Knowledge Exchange

THE CSWIR PODCAST SERIES

The CSWIR Podcast Series has been a new venture we hope to continue. Focused on our themes of 'decolonisation' and 'working in uncertain times' we made three podcasts.

The first - '[Decolonisation: Honest Conversations about White Supremacy](#)' - featured CSWIR Director, Professor Gillian Ruch, in conversation with Victoria Forson, a social worker with CAFCASS exploring together their understandings and experiences of being white and black women (respectively) working in the social work sector. The conversation was an honest exchange of how unrecognised positions of white privilege can lead to misunderstandings in how behaviours are understood. Speaking candidly about just such an encounter, Gillian and Victoria shared their views on how we can challenge racism and discrimination. The podcast set the tone for how white individuals need to be willing to be vulnerable in order to understand our privilege and deepen our awareness of the daily discriminatory encounters people of colour have to navigate. Victoria's respectfully assertive stance is an example for us all to learn from.

The second podcast - '[Using Healing as a way of Decolonising Social Work Education](#)' - featured CSWIR Co-Director, Dr Henglien Lisa Chen, engaging with Dr Kris Clarke, Associate Professor of Social Work, Faculty of Social Sciences, University of Helsinki, Finland, on issues of ethnicity and healing in the context of decolonising social work education. Their conversation emphasised the importance of absorbing healing into the dialogue on race and ethnicity, especially in contemporary contexts where ethnic conflict is rife - and in the important process of acknowledging indigenous histories that are often neglected.

The third podcast - '[Navigating Uncertainty](#)' - was a collaboration between Jo Williams, a doctoral researcher affiliated with CSWIR, and Chris Reynolds, a doctoral researcher at Flinders University. This forms part of the ongoing CSWIR-SWIRLS collaboration. The podcast dealt with the topic of uncertainty from the perspectives of two social workers at different stages of their PhD journey.



AGEING WELL

The 'Ageing Journey' event was co-hosted by Dr Henglien Lisa Chen and colleagues from [Time to Talk Befriending](#) at the Brighton & Hove Ageing Well Festival on the International Day for Elders in October 2021.

The event focused on ageing as a natural part of life, but asked how often we consider what is important to us as we age? Following the event, successful collaborations took place with three primary schools, [Engaging with Ageing](#) and a local public library. The aim is now to capture how older age is viewed and identify how people embrace change throughout their life-course with people of all ages. The outcome of this research will enable the co-production of resources which will be made available to people of all generations with the aim of bridging the gap between ages and encouraging a more positive, realistic and resilient mind-set to ageing and the ageing journey.

If you would like to contribute towards the project, please [complete the survey on The Ageing Journey Project website](#).

THE FOURTH CSWIR PSYCHOSOCIAL SYMPOSIUM

In July 2022, we held our fourth CSWIR Psychosocial Symposium on the theme 'Exploring Research Writing'. Two participants reflect below on their experiences of the event. The common themes that these pieces share is self-evident and a reminder of the importance of research relationships and reflection.

"We met in person and were joined online by Jette Kofoed from the University of Aarhus in Copenhagen. [Dr Kim Lasky](#), a poet and Associate Researcher in Global Studies at Sussex, facilitated the morning session. Kim runs the 'Self, Voice and Creativity in Research Writing' module on the MSc in Social Research Methods and organises cross-disciplinary writing workshops throughout the University. We were supported, by Kim, to explore the writing process through a number of creative techniques and approaches. In our afternoon session we sat outside and undertook a group analytic method using the Many Minds approach. CSWIR member and doctoral researcher, Jo Williams, generously shared her data. Through Jo's rich data, we were invited to consider the social work supervisory relationship and to pay close attention to a specific interaction between a manager and a supervisee. Through the group process, we explored the dynamics and feelings evoked through this method.

A key feature of the Symposium (that keeps me/us coming back!) is the atmosphere of supportive inquiry, free of critical judgement or pressing deadlines. The group work is fascinating. I experience the Symposium as both grounding and inspiring. The opportunity to work with like-minded people connected to CSWIR is something I highly value, stimulating connections and bridging my social work practices."

Dr Louise Sims

BASW Professional Officer & CSWIR Member

“We were a small group of about 15, with some previous connections and some brand new to the, by now, annual gathering. We sat as usual in a circle - I say “as usual” but of course there was nothing ‘usual’ about the circle, after two years of zoom circles! So that in itself felt very nurturing and exciting straightaway. What I love about the forum is the care and attention we are invited to pay to thinking and feeling at many levels - and the slower pace of doing that. A vase of sweetpeas, for example, in the centre of the circle, was a simple reminder to stay in touch with a fuller view of life, that - as academics - we can sometimes perhaps lose touch with.

The day was split in two. In the morning we were gently led through a series of free writing exercises, followed by reflective discussions around the subject of writing and finding our voice. Rather than the content of the discussion, what stands out for me, as I think back, is the energy and connection that we felt as we thought and talked together. I think it’s this, more than what we said, that has carried through to my work - a sense of being together in the multi-layered and complex task of writing with others who understand.

In the afternoon we took part in a ‘Many Minds’ research methods group, which was a chance for me to continue to learn about this method. The reflections afterwards about how we can advance the equanimity and ethics of psychosocial methods were really helpful and further solidified a sense of shared connection and mutual support for thinking psychosocially in our work.

Dr Rachael Owens

Innovate Project Researcher & CSWIR Member



Symposium members conversing in the sunshine. We did work hard – honestly!

Co-Create Postgraduate Community

Following postgraduate researcher inductions in September 2021, CSWIR established the forum 'Co-Create Postgraduate Community' to enhance communication and engagement with postgraduate researchers.

Driven by the co-created ideas of our researchers, we worked together to facilitate public engagement for our researchers' research, creating shared ownership on organising and facilitating research seminars and knowledge exchange between CSWIR researchers and those from our international partner institutions. This year, we have conducted three Public Engagement Events. Our researchers reflect here on how valuable these events have been for their research and development.

'ILLUMINATING ADOPTIVE FAMILY PRACTICES IN INDIA: A NARRATIVE ANALYSIS OF POLICY AND LIVED EXPERIENCE'

Presenter: Sushri Sangita Puhan

Recently graduated Postgraduate Researcher, Department of Social Work & Social Care.

More often than not, research has significant relevance for practice and policy - particularly social science research. Translating it into an easy, understandable language to communicate why the research is important is sometimes difficult. Often, we researchers struggle with engaging with the public, or with a wider audience, beyond academia. However, it is important to present what we are doing, why it matters and how it affects people's lives.

The CSWIR Public Engagement Events is a forum that provides a platform to share research with a larger community - of academics, researchers, practitioners, policy-makers and the general public.

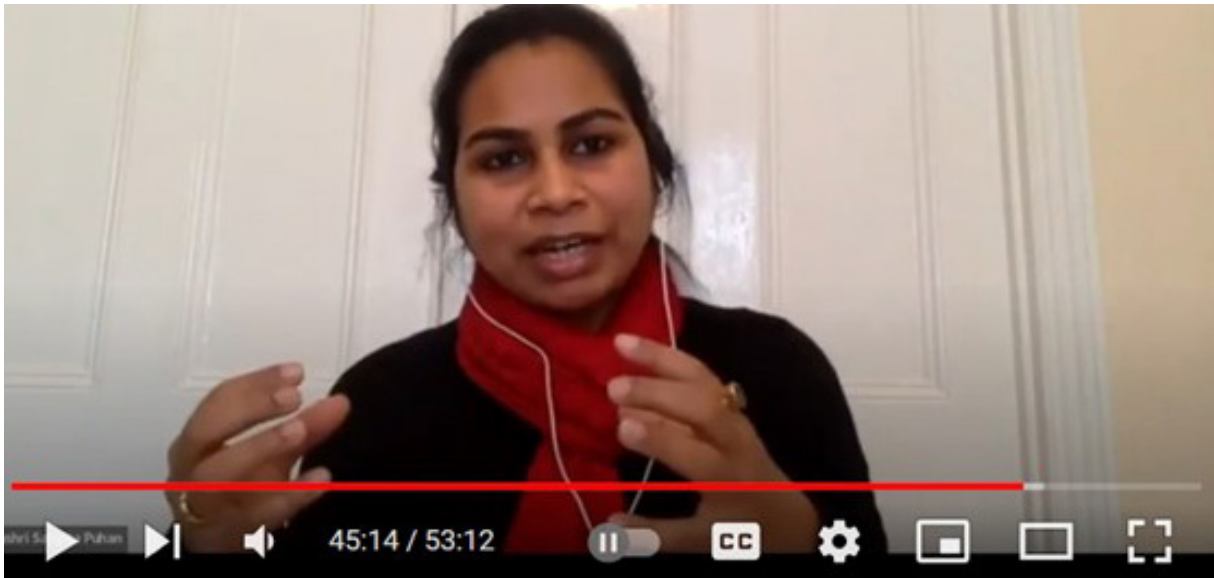
The opportunity to share my own research came on 11 November 2021 - the first since receiving the PhD. My doctoral study was exploratory and became a ground-breaking study in addressing the scarcely researched topic of adoption in India. Even though adoption is adequately researched in the global north, India has unique socio-cultural dynamics which were reflected in my research and are relevant to understanding adoptive family practices in this context for practitioners and researchers in the UK and elsewhere.

During my PhD, I tried to share my research with the general public through the writing of blog posts, opinion pieces, and social media. These generated interest and dialogue but to only a limited extent. The CSWIR event provided me with a structured platform to amplify engagement constructively with a range of stakeholders across various continents - which was an overwhelming experience. The Centre's global reach and reputation with researchers, organisations and external academic communities was hugely beneficial and my session attracted participants from Australia to Canada. The interactive session was particularly helpful for disseminating knowledge and gathering ideas to shape my research priorities and direction.

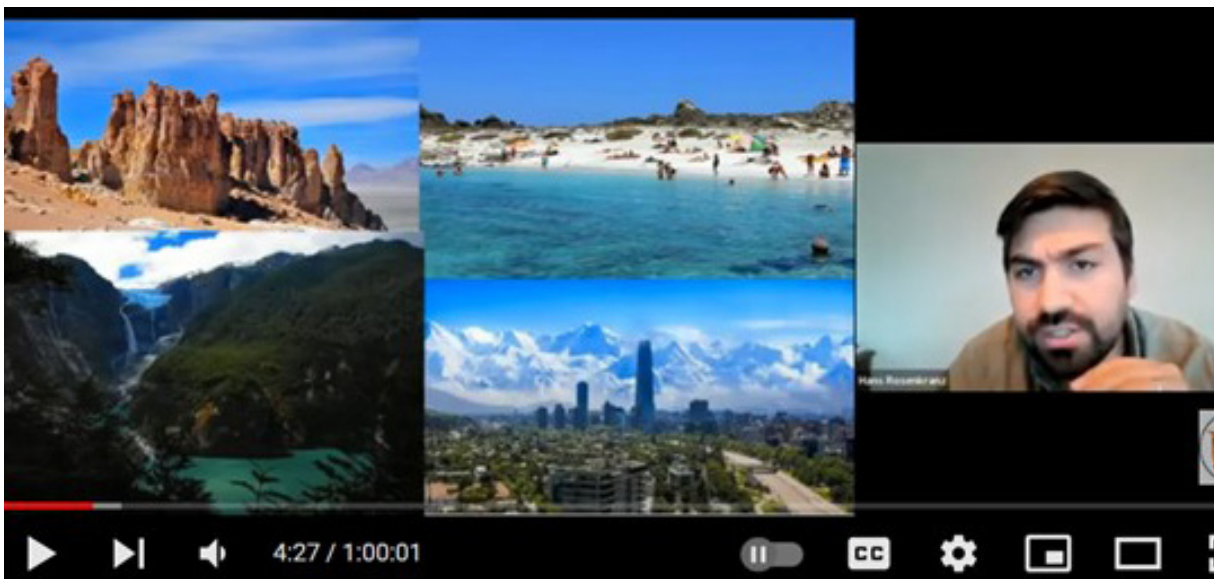
This sort of public engagement was new to me and framing the content suitably for a non-academic audience was a bit challenging. But the support provided by the CSWIR team made the process smooth.

Particular and special thanks to Dr. Henglien Lisa Chen, CSWIR Co-Director, for her valuable input and guidance in shaping my presentation in a way that made it relatable, understandable and interactive. I also appreciate the diligent efforts of CSWIR's Research Assistant, Avanka Fernando, in her support disseminating information pre and post the event, and providing technical support on the day,

I found the experience extremely rewarding and would encourage other PGRs to use this forum for public engagement, networking and interdisciplinary exchange.



Sushri Sangita Puhan presents 'Illuminating Adoptive Family Practices in India'



Hans Rosenkranz presents 'Collaboration and Participation in Complex Times' (see page 27)

'SOCIAL ISOLATION AND LONELINESS AMONGST OLDER PEOPLE FROM MINORITISED ETHNIC GROUPS LIVING IN THE UK'

Presenter: Brenda Hayanga

Research Fellow,
Department of Social Work & Social Care.

Since completing my PhD in 2020, disseminating my findings has been a priority. I was fortunate enough to be introduced to Dr Chen by my mentor, Professor Michelle Lefevre, who believed that Dr Chen could assist me. When I was introduced, I expressed my desire to ensure that my findings reached audiences beyond academia - in particular voluntary organisations, policy makers and practitioners with an interest in the ageing population.

She first suggested that I share a brief summary of my research findings. So I created a poster summarising my research which she shared via various online platforms to help increase the visibility of my PhD findings. She also suggested organising an event that would be hosted by the Centre for Social Work, Innovation and Research. Since I had not presented my research in full since completing the PhD, I was pleased with this opportunity as it would allow me to discuss the entirety of my four phased mixed methods project. I was given several months to prepare for the event and was told to expect an international audience from different disciplines. With this in mind, I prepared my presentation to cater for academics and non-academics who may not be familiar with social isolation and loneliness amongst older people from minoritised ethnic groups living in the UK.



Although 50 people signed up to attend, around 20 or so joined on the day. Overall, I believe that the event was successful and I was pleased that this many people joined. There were attendees from Japan, the Czech Republic, South Korea and the UK. Dr Chen made it clear that the event was not just about the dissemination of my PhD findings, but also about networking. She encouraged the audience to introduce themselves and to provide their contact details in the chat function if they would like to be contacted after the event.

A Q&A session followed my one-hour presentation with the participants raising various interesting questions with regards to the methodology, the theoretical framework and implications for policy and practice. Their questions helped me to reflect on the process of the PhD, and in answering their questions I was able to give an in-depth response to the methods I employed in the study - in particular, qualitative comparative analysis and dialogic performance analysis. I was fortunate to have Avanka managing the chat and Dr Chen facilitating the Q&A session.

After the session, Dr Chen, Avanka and I stayed online to discuss how we felt it had gone. I was encouraged to consider contacting those participants who had given their contact details and to perhaps create a study circle to discuss matters of social isolation and loneliness amongst older people. They also provided me the transcript of the event so that I could review all the questions and reflect on those that I had not been able to answer during the session.

The event has undoubtedly helped me achieve my aim of disseminating my PhD findings to people beyond academia. It also provided me with an opportunity to network and reach out to those with similar interests. I am hoping that, through these connections, I will eventually develop fruitful collaborations to further my work on addressing social isolation and loneliness amongst older people from minoritised ethnic groups living in the UK.

'COLLABORATION AND PARTICIPATION IN COMPLEX TIMES: STRUCTURAL CHANGES AND PANDEMIC IN CHILE'

Presenter: Hans Rosenkranz

Executive Director,
Comunidad de Organizaciones Solidarias

Facilitator: Felipe Parades Ramos

Postgraduate Researcher, Department of
Social Work and Social Care,
University of Sussex

The invitation to discuss collaboration and participation in the Chilean context was an idea that began at a PGR Co-Create Community meeting hosted by CSWIR. The group talked about the actions and direction the space could take. Thoughts about the importance of linking the academic world with people working in the field started to emerge. In my case, I have developed a particular interest in my country's development - especially considering the significant changes in which Chile is living after the social uprising in 2019 and the pandemic. A new constitution is being constructed this year as a result of the social movement. CSWIR was keen to discuss the role of the civil sector in these complex times and how NGOs and different organizations are responding to the challenges of turbulent times where the polarization of society is the tonic.

Decolonization of knowledge is not only about recognizing practices of power that silence other possibilities of understanding. It is a framework from which to pursue a way of rescuing knowledge that emerges in contexts different from the ones we usually hear. Giving formal spaces to analyse and discuss new possibilities of solutions to similar issues allows us to democratise knowledge and begin an actual interchange.

The invitation for Hans Rosenkranz to give a talk and open an interchange of ideas was not a naïve one. Hans is the Director of Chile's leading civil society network - home of multiple public and private partnerships for tackling social problems. His talk aimed to make noise and disturb how we think about collaboration and participation. The presidency called upon his organization in the middle of the social uprising to try to understand where and how to approach the crisis. Hans was an essential figure in the organization of different groups that gave ideas on how to try to reach peaceful ways to find solutions and create trust in a politically disarticulated context.

At the event, Hans discussed the lessons he had learned while trying to organize responses to complex social situations, such as the social uprising in Chile and the pandemic. He explained his ideas for strengthening society, articulate social movements, create partnerships between different actors, and create transparency in contexts of mistrust. There was also discussion about the role of the civil sector in creating possibilities for innovation and the state's position.

The conversation was not closed. Many ideas need more reflection and more in-depth analysis. Nevertheless, it was the start of an ongoing discussion that will probably continue in different contexts as we move forward with these CSWIR enabled encounters.

DOCTORAL RESEARCH IN PROGRESS WORKSHOPS

'Doing a PhD is a Team Sport!'

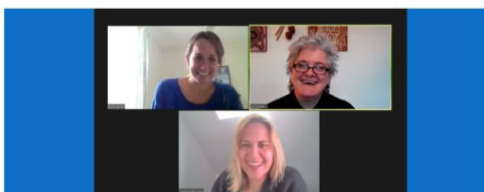
by Jo Williams, Anna Hutchings & Amy Lynch

In April 2020 - at the beginning of the global Coronavirus pandemic - we formed an online PhD support group. We were all at similar stages of our PhD journey - each exploring an aspect of child and family social work - and our supervisors linked us up. Due to the continuing restrictions and geographical distance, we met monthly via Zoom (eventually meeting for the first time in person in March 2022) and also had weekly contact via a WhatsApp group. The emotional and academic support we shared was invaluable.

When we set up our group, we agreed on a 'Terms of Reference' which reflected that our arrangement constituted 'informal support' and that it would feature focused time together to think about our research - building on the ideas of Claire Durrant (2020), a former doctoral researcher in the School of Education and Social Work. Having supported each other through the research proposal and ethics stages, we reflected on a shared aspect of our research: we all planned to conduct online qualitative interviews with social work professionals as our core research method. We decided to create a focus and pilot our interview methods with one another.

DEVELOPING PHD ONLINE SUPPORT GROUPS: PILOTING RESEARCH METHODS

AMY LYNCH, JO WILLIAMS AND ANNA HUTCHINGS - 11TH NOVEMBER 2021



Our piloting process in April and May 2021 provided each of us with an opportunity to try out our methods of interviewing with one another before interviewing a 'real participant'. This meant that we each had an experience of being both a researcher and a research participant on two occasions each, which was a powerful learning opportunity. It not only enabled us to develop confidence in some of the practical aspects of the interviewer role - such as how to work online platforms and digital recorders - we were also able to develop interviewing skills and consider our new PhD researcher identity. In the participant role, it was useful to feel the desire to 'give the right answers' and consider how we felt valued and motivated to talk about a subject we are interested in.

Our learning together was a rich experience and helped us to feel contained and confident as we embarked on our fieldwork. In November 2021, we shared our learning with other PhD researchers through an online Doctoral Research in Progress (DRiP) session. As a group, we reflected on the benefits of undertaking a methods pilot within an online doctoral support group in developing our 'researcher readiness'. We also discussed the trust that had developed between us over the first six months of our group which enabled us to safely expose our vulnerabilities and make mistakes as we embarked on our journeys of becoming a researcher. The DRiP was a great experience as it gave us an opportunity to collaboratively plan, write, present and practice our public speaking skills with a supportive extended peer group.

Our online PhD support group continues to thrive, and we look forward to sharing our future experiences of the process.

Durrant, C. (2020): ['Video Call Support Groups for Doctoral Researchers: An Implementation Guide'](#) [Accessed on 14.06.2022]

Collaboratively Hosted Events

[‘USING ARTS-BASED METHODS TO ACCESS VULNERABLE CHILDREN’S EXPERIENCE: THE CASE OF CHILDREN IN THE LESBOS REFUGEE CAMP’](#)

In January 2022, CSWIR was delighted to host an online seminar delivered by Professor Ephrat Huss, from the Ben Gurion University in Israel. Professor Huss demonstrated how a qualitative arts-based methodology can be used to understand and evaluate the lived experiences and social realities of marginalized children. The methodology enables vulnerable children to be consulted and to express their worldview in order to influence their lives and co-create effective services and interventions.

The arts-based methods were illustrated by two case studies:

- Children in a refugee school in Lesbos
- Youth in unrecognized Bedouin villages.

Both groups of children live in deep poverty and experience cultural marginalization. The methodology captures children’s phenomenological, physical and socially contextualized experiences, needs and ways of coping, and provides a useful protocol with which to approach the dimensions of children’s lives, health and needs that are difficult to research using traditional methods due to their cultural context and related challenges.

The event was co-hosted with the [Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth](#) (CIRCY).

‘KINSHIP CARE: BETWIXT AND BETWEEN’

In this CSWIR-CIRCY collaborative seminar, Dr Louise Sims (BASW) explored the challenges faced by kinship carers and professionals engaged in this rapidly expanding area of practice.

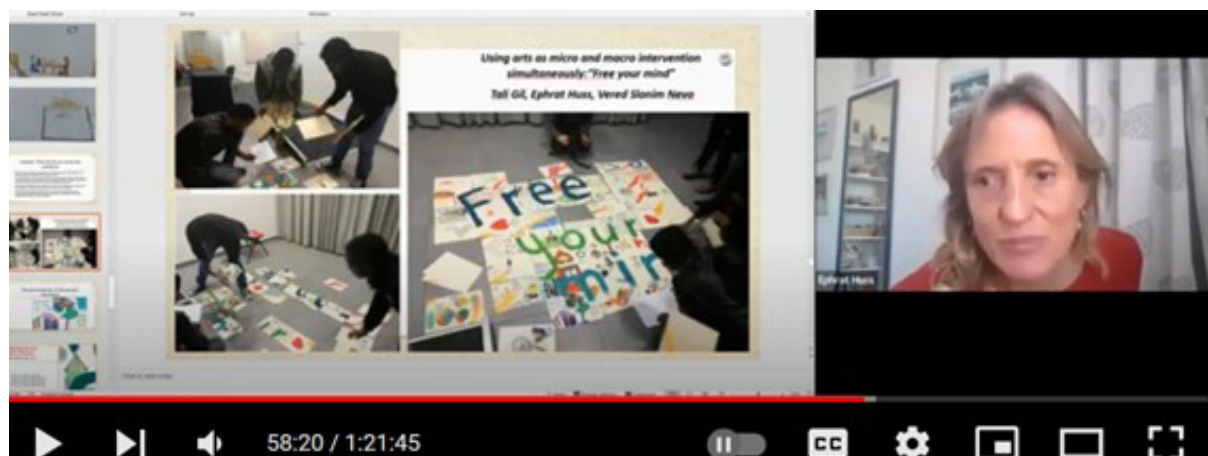
The last decade has witnessed ‘the withering of the state’ (Hingley-Jones, 2019) and the pandemic has laid bare the results. As the state withers, families are increasingly being asked to support younger family members, often at times of crisis - and when they themselves are in crisis.

Kinship care has come to be known as the unsung and unsupported ‘third pillar of the social care sector’ and yet there is little scaffolding in place for it. Statutory support, legal, social work, policy, data gathering and research responses have not kept pace with developments. We know very little of children’s experiences or ‘what is going on ‘inside’ [kinship] families’ (Pitcher, 2014, p.20).

The seminar drew on Joanne Warner’s (2015) work on emotional politics as a psychosocial lens to consider both the matrix of tensions shaping kinship practices, and the possibilities for new understanding and connections within families and across disciplines.

The event was co-hosted with the [Centre for Innovation and Research in Childhood and Youth](#) (CIRCY).

Professor Ephrat Huss’ event



CROSS-CENTRE MENTORING WORKSHOP

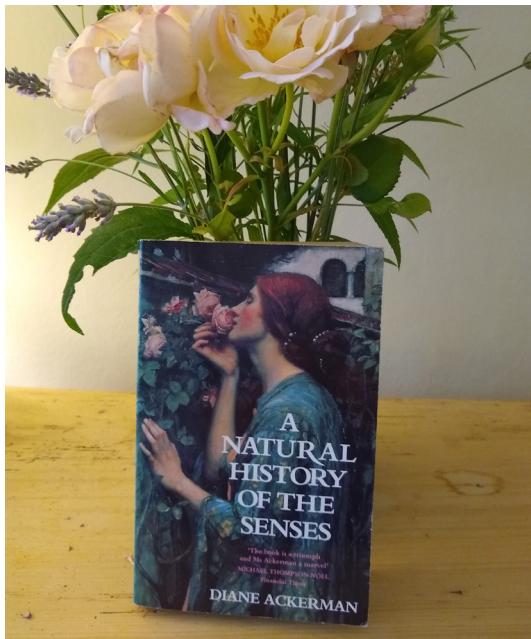
Following the introduction of a new mentoring framework in the School, this CSWIR-hosted event provided faculty colleagues with an opportunity to develop their mentoring skillset through creative methods.

Dr Kim Lasky, a published poet and creative writer and Associate Researcher in Global Studies at Sussex, facilitated the morning session in which participants had the opportunity to creatively engage in mentoring-related activities, including some forest bathing for good measure!

Reflecting on the day, Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith, Head of the Department of Education commented:

“...such a powerful day. We really need opportunities like this to connect with colleagues in collaborative development of our professional practice at a deeper level, for the benefit of all. I left the day feeling very much more positive and inspired about the opportunities we have for engaging with our colleagues and students in meaningful, creative and mutually beneficial ways, including some valuable practical techniques for doing so. It was a real pleasure to work together with colleagues in such a concentrated, supported space.”

We hope this might be the beginning of a series of such events that will enliven and strengthen our mentoring practices.



World Social Work Day 2022

On World Social Work Day (Tuesday 15 March, 2022) SWIRLS and CSWIR jointly hosted an online event to discuss what the registration of Social Work means for values, principles and identity.

The Australian and UK context provided a unique opportunity to explore both the opportunities and challenges registration has for the profession, locally and globally – as Australia embarks on registration, while the UK has experienced registration for two decades.

This lecture, hosted and facilitated by SWIRLS Director, Professor Sarah Wendt, brought together CSWIR Director, Professor Gillian Ruch, CSWIR Co-Director, Dr Henglien Lisa Chen, SWIRLS member, Lorna Hallahan, Australian social work practitioner, Fiona Ward, and UK Expert by Experience, Gillian Maher, to discuss their experience with - and perspective of - social work registration.

The event attracted 60+ attendees who found the content relevant and valuable to the social work sector.

The success of this event sees SWIRLS and CSWIR planning another public lecture in late 2022.

[The event was recorded and is available to view on the CSWIR website.](#)



Publications

The following are selected publications from CSWIR members related to the research interests and annual themes of our research centre.

A comprehensive list of publications can be found on the [web profiles of individual CSWIR members](#).

- **Bastian, Carmela & Wendt, Sarah** (2022): '[Collaboration between Child Protection and Domestic and Family Violence: A Case File Review](#)', *Australian Social Work*
- **Becares, Laia** & Kneale, Dylan (2022): 'Inequalities in mental health, self-rated health, and social support among sexual minority young adults during the COVID-19 pandemic: analyses from the UK Millennium Cohort Study'. *Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology*. ISSN 0933-7954
- **Berriman, Liam** & Jaynes, Victoria (2021): '[Displaying family in a digital age: how parents negotiate technology, visibility and privacy](#)'. In: Quaid, Sheila, Hugman, Catriona and Wilcock, Angela (eds.) 'Negotiating families and personal lives in the 21st Century: exploring diversity, social change and inequalities'. *Sociological Futures*. Routledge, Abingdon, Oxon. ISBN 9780367483401
- **Boddy, Janet** & Morrow, V (2021): '[The ethics of data re-use and secondary data analysis in narrative inquiry](#)'. In: Phoenix, Ann, Brannen, Julia and Squire, Corrine (eds.) *Researching Family Narratives*. Sage, London ISBN 9781526439093
- **Cane, Tam Chipawe**; Newton, Paul & Foster, John (2022): '[Understanding women's help-seeking for problematic and unhealthy alcohol use through the lens of complexity theory](#)'. *Advances in Dual Diagnosis*. ISSN 2042-8324
- **Cane, Tam Chipawe & Prospera, Tedam**, (2022): '[We didn't learn enough about racism and anti-racist practice': newly qualified social workers' challenge in wrestling racism](#)', *Social Work Education*
- **Cane, Tam** (2021): '[Attempting to disrupt racial division in social work classrooms through small-group activities](#)'. *The Journal of Practice Teaching and Learning*, 18 (1-2).
- Capella, Claudia & **Boddy, Janet** (2021): '[Listening to the "opinista"? Relational understandings of voice and silence in a multiperspective narrative study of child psychotherapy](#)'. *Children & Society*. ISSN 0951-0605
- Chou, Yueh-Ching & **Kröger, Teppo** (2022) 'Ageing in Place Together: Older Parents and Ageing Offspring with Intellectual Disability'. *Ageing and Society*. 42 (2), 480–494
- **Chen, Hengliu Lisa**, Farinha, Ana Ferreira, Mcveigh, Tara, Giorgi, Nadia, Plumstead, Jessica, Ruth, Jodie, Cotter, Aoife, Goldsmith, Victoria, Fahey, Kayleigh & Ilicic, Anna (2021): 'The challenges and opportunities of sustaining professional development during the COVID pandemic: the experiences of student social workers of placement in England.' *Social Dialog*, 25. ISSN 2221-352X
- **Durrant, Claire** (2022): '*I didn't want to face another day of failing:: The emotional wellbeing of young people with severe dyslexic difficulties in state mainstream education: social and discursive constructions*, PhD thesis.
- **Hayanga, Brenda**, Stafford, Mai & **Becares, Laia** (2021): 'Ethnic inequalities in healthcare use and care quality among people with multiple long-term health conditions living in the United Kingdom: a systematic review and narrative synthesis'. *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health*, 18 (23). a12599 1-23. ISSN 1660-4601.
- **Holmes, Lisa**, Lewis, Shirley, Wrigley, Marc, Sanders-Ellis, David & Harrison, Neil (2022): '[Lifelong links: embedding practice](#)'. *Other. Family Rights Group*.
- **Huegler, Nathalie** (2022): '[Phase one feedback from Innovate Project Transitional Safeguarding research](#)'. *Knowledge Exchange*, 20 June 2022, Virtual.

- **Huegler, Nathalie & Ruch, Gillian** (2021): '[Risk, vulnerability and complexity: transitional safeguarding as a reframing of binary perspectives](#)'. *Practice*. pp 1-15. ISSN 0950-3153
- **Huegler, Nathalie, Ruch, Gillian, Damman, Jeri, Bowyer, Susannah & Lefevre, Michelle** (2022): '[Transitional Safeguarding: Exploring opportunities and challenges in systems supporting young people and young adults who experience extra-familial risks](#)'. *European Conference for Social Work Research 2022*, 6-8 April 2022, Amsterdam, The Netherlands.
- Ilmarinen, Katja, Van Aerschot, Lina & **Kröger, Teppo** (2022): 'Not Free at All: Home Care User Fees in a Nordic Care System'. *Social Policy and Society*.
- Julkunen, Ilse, **Ruch, Gillian** & Nurmi, Anna (2022): '[Social work in a superdiverse society: a conceptual exploration of cooperation in professional practice](#)'. *European Journal of Social Work*. pp. 1-14. ISSN 1369-1457
- **Kirby, Perpetua, Villani, Michela & Webb, Rebecca** (2022): '[Children's Covid-19 writing and drawings and the existential imperative to educate for uncertainty](#)'. *Children & Society*. pp. 1-22. ISSN 0951-0605
- **Kröger, Teppo** (2022): *Care Poverty: When Older People's Needs Remain Unmet*. Palgrave Macmillan.
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Achievements and Awards

RESEARCH PROJECTS AND GRANTS

- **Dr David Orr** was awarded a consultancy by the Wellcome Trust for the WT Mental Health Programme Strategy Preventing and addressing workers' mental health in LMICs (18 October 2021 - 17 April 2022).
David is also the Principal Investigator along with the research team members **Professor Michelle Lefevre** and **Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic** for the National Institute for Health Research funded project Improving collaborative inter-agency systems and practice in self-neglect: identifying barriers and co-producing solutions (1 March 2022 - 30 June 2024).
- **Professor Elaine Sharland, Dr Perpetua Kirby, Dr Liam Berriman, Professor Gillian Ruch, Professor Lisa Holmes** and **Dr Caitlin Shaughnessy** are partners in an innovative five year Nuffield Foundation funded project which aims to transform how information about and from children and families is gathered, interpreted and used in child and family social policy at local and national levels.
- **Professor Gillian Ruch** was awarded consultancies on several projects: The Practice Enhancement Project funded by the Vale of Glamorgan Council, the Professional Development Workshop (19 May 2022) by Brighton & Hove City Council, and the Panda Project funded by Queens University Belfast (1 November 2021 - 31 August 2023).
She was also appointed Principal Investigator for the Reflective Supervision for Designated Safeguarding Leads research project (1 November 2021 - 31 July 2022) funded by What Works for Childrens' Social Care.
- **Dr Hengliu Lisa Chen** was awarded the UKRI Healthy Ageing Catalyst Award 2021 from UK Research and Innovation for the project 'Co-developing a Sustainable, Meaningful, Digital Platform to Enhance Mobility and Active Ageing of Community Dwelling Older Adults (>75 years) from 1 September 2021 - 31 August 2022.
- **Professor Janet Boddy** was appointed consultant for the Evaluation Steering Group funded by the Dartington Hall Trust (1 April 2021 - 31 March 2022).
- **Dr Kristine Hickie** is Principal Investigator on the Esmee Fairbairn Foundation funded research project 'Evaluation of Safer London's Harmful Sexual Behaviours Service (1 March 2021 - 31 December 2023).
She also worked as a consultant on 'Developing a Trauma-informed Police Force: A training and consultancy project', funded by East Sussex-County Council (31 May 2021 - 30 September 2021) and, together with **Dr Carlie Goldsmith**, worked on 'Developing a Trauma-informed Police Force: A training and consultancy project funded by Sussex Police (1 May 2021 - 1 March 2022).
- **Dr Kristine Hickie** (Principal Investigator), **Professor Lisa Holmes** and **Professor Michelle Lefevre** were selected by The Children's Society to work on the 'Disruption Exploitation Phase 2 Evaluation' (1 June 2022 - 30 November 2024).

- **Dr Laia Becares** is the Principal Investigator for the project 'The social, cultural and economic impacts of the pandemic on ethnic and racialised groups' funded by UK Research and Innovation (2 February 2021 - 11 August 2022). Laia was also a consultant on the NHS Race & Health Observatory Rapid Review by the University of Manchester (26 July - 11 September 2021).
- **Professor Michelle Lefevre** (Principal Investigator) and **Professor Lisa Holmes** were awarded funding by the London Borough of Hackney to conduct the research project 'Evaluating the Embedding of a New Contextual Safeguarding System in the London Borough of Hackney (1 February 2021 - 30 September 2022).
- **Dr Reima Ana Maglajlic** was awarded a research grant from the British Academy for the project 'Madness after Extreme Events: Co-produced understanding of mental distress in the context of political conflict, natural disasters, and global pandemic in Bosnia and Herzegovina' (1 November 2021 - 1 May 2023).
- **Dr Tam Cane, Dr Louise Gazeley, Dr Julia Sutherland** and **Professor Michelle Lefevre** were awarded funding by Essex County Council for research into 'Multi-agency working to Improve the Educational Outcomes of Children Known to Social Care (31 May 2022 - 31 January 2023).

CAMPBELL COLLABORATION'S FARAH JAMAL AWARD 2021

Dr Brenda Hayanga, Research Fellow within the Department of Social Work and Social Care, was the joint recipient of the prestigious Campbell Collaboration's Farah Jamal Award 2021.

The award recognised Brenda's significant work for ethnic minoritised groups in the UK, and the importance of exploring the impact of health and socio-economic inequalities on people from minoritised ethnic groups.

RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK 2021

In the Research Excellency Framework (REF) 2021, 92 per cent of the Department of Social Work and Social Care's research outputs were assessed as being of "world-leading" quality or "internationally excellent".

The work of many CSWIR members was reflected in these excellent results with **Professor Gillian Ruch** (CSWIR Director) and **Dr David Orr**'s (Head of the Department of Social Work & Social Care) impact case studies being particularly lauded. Gillian leads on the Talking and Listening to Children initiative which provides social workers with skills and physical tools to improve emotional literacy when working with children and families. Gillian believes *"The key to effective communication as a social worker comes down to uniqueness – being able to relate to every child as a unique individual in their own unique context. It is also about how the social worker is able to remain authentic and transparent."*

David's impact case study has informed safeguarding policies for those who self-neglect and hoard. his research illustrated the need for adult safeguarding governance to be underpinned by legislation to strengthen inter-agency collaboration, accountability and commitment to safeguarding.

[More details on these exemplary case studies can be found on the University's website.](#)

IMPACT CHAMPIONS 2022

Following the outcomes of REF 2021, **Dr Kristine Hickie** and the School of Education and Social Work's former Senior Research Officer, Dr Deeptima Massey, were singled out by the University of Sussex for special commendation for their REF work.

Kristi was named 'Academic Impact Champion for Leadership in Impact and Knowledge Exchange, Building Capacity and Generating Culture Change'.

Deeptima was named 'Professional Services Impact Champion for Innovative Leadership in Professional Services that has Supported Expanded Capacity and Creativity in Generating Research Impact'.

CSWIR congratulates both on this significant achievement and reflection of their efforts.

INNOVATION FELLOWSHIP

Dr Hengliu Lisa Chen has been awarded an Innovation Fellowship by the University of Sussex to share enterprise and innovation knowledge with Sussex colleagues and acting as an innovation advocate by leading a community of practice, and contributing to initiatives to develop enterprise projects, skills and career options.

Lisa has developed a strong publication record in the fields of gerontology and social work, evidenced by peer-reviewed articles in social work journals. By receiving the Wiley 'Most Read' award, Lisa is also able to generate demonstrable impact in the application of ageing care research on (inter)national practice and knowledge exchange.

The Centre for Social Work Innovation and Research (CSWIR)
is located within the Department of Social Work and Social Care
in Essex House on the University of Sussex campus.

The University is situated on a modern campus on the edge of the
South Downs National Park near the lively seaside city of Brighton and Hove.

London is one hour away by train,
and there is easy access to Gatwick and Heathrow airports.

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