

Social Work Education, Policy and Practice (SWEPP) Research Group

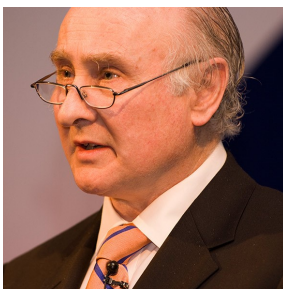
Newsletter December 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the second newsletter from the **Social Work Education, Policy and Practice (SWEPP)** Research Group. The aim of this newsletter is to let you know about the work of the SWEPP, and we hope you find it interesting and informative.

The work of SWEPP is centred on the [International Federation of Social Work \(IFSW\) definition of social work](#). Although individual group members have differing and diverse areas of interest, our common focus is our interest in particularly marginalised groups and areas of practice. As such, SWEPP aims to promote **social justice, human rights and emancipatory practice** in these domains, through its research activities and dissemination of findings.

Please read on to find out more about our work.



SWEPP Research Group Launch

The SWEPP Research Group was formally launched on 10th November at an online event as part of the BCU Department of Social Work's 50th Anniversary Celebrations. Expertly chaired by Colin, the event began with welcoming comments from Prof. Alex Kendall, followed by a keynote presentation by **Prof. David Croisdale-Appleby OBE**. Prof. Croisdale-Appleby described SWEPP as 'an intellectual powerhouse' and welcomed its formation and the leadership profile it gives to social work research. David Collins and Colin then outlined the role and focus of SWEPP before individual members offered an overview of their individual research interests and activities. SWEPP members were delighted to be joined by **Dr. Peter Gramberg**, Saxion University, The Netherlands, who presented on the international collaboration between BCU and Saxion University, before the launch ended with an engaging debate, facilitated by David Collins and Val, exploring the question: *Is Social Work a Science or an Art?*

SWEPP New Members

Current members David Collins, Dr Colin Watt, Dr Val Sylvester, Jessica Wagner and Dr Peter Simcock are delighted to welcome two new members of staff to SWEPP, Gero Kaur and Mandy Lewis, who are both undertaking EdD studies.

Gero is exploring the student experience during placement, focusing specifically upon the impact that practice has upon the student. Mandy is exploring the experiences of Off-Site Practice Educators through their perceptions and views about the role and relationship with the HEIs. In particular, she is looking at whether the different types and levels of support provided by HEIs influence the quality of the Practice Educators' overall assessment of the social work student, contributes to the professional development of the Practice Educator and has any impact upon their professional identity.

A **warm welcome** to Gero and Mandy.



Presentations/ Conferences

In October 2021, Peter presented at the **Deafblind UK Virtual National Convention**. This was the first of its kind in the UK and was attended by over 700 people, including practitioners, academics and those living with deafblindness. His paper was entitled: *'I just keep going' – The managing and coping experiences of older people ageing with deafblindness'*

In November 2021, David presented at the **'Building Back Better (Not Just a Slogan)'** International Conference, the third online conference developed by the Social Work Departments at BCU, the Université de Saint Boniface, Manitoba, Canada and the University of Manitoba, Canada. Conference delegates included practitioners, academics, students and people with lived experience of social work services from Canada, the UK and central Europe. David's paper was entitled: *'The Profession's Pièce de Résistance as an Act of Resistance: The Use of Art in Social Work'*

In November 2021, Jess presented at the **'Understanding Social Justice: Perspectives from Doctoral Research (in progress)'** conference, organised by the School of Social Work, Care and Community, University of Central Lancashire. Her paper was entitled: *'An analysis of protective factors promoting resilience against intergenerational DVA in men'*

Peter has been invited to be a Keynote Speaker at the **11th National Deafblind Conference, Fremantle, Australia** in June 2022. The title of his presentation is *'Deafblind People and Covid-19: a population impacted, yet making an impact'*.

Books & Book Proposals

Together with three other academics, David has had a book proposal accepted by publishers Francis and Taylor. The working title is *'Entertaining Scholarship: Embracing difference, disruption and creativity within your research'* and will be part of a series called *'Insider Guides to Success in Academia'*. David's co-authors are Dr Kieran Fenby-Hulse (Research Policy and Impact Manager at Teesside University); Dr Geof Hill (Managing Director of The Investigative Practitioner in Australia); and Dr Kate Carruthers Thomas (Senior Research Fellow and Project Manager for Athena SWAN at BCU). The aim is to complete the book within the next twelve months.

Val is currently collaborating with Dr Barbara Howard Hunt in writing a book proposal based on their independent PhD studies.



Update on Pilot Project

When Level 3 is not enough: English Local Authority decision making in relation to required qualification levels for specialist deafblind assessment

Peter (Principal investigator) and Colin (Co-investigator) are working in collaboration with the National Learning and Research Manager at Deafblind UK, a person living with deafblindness and a Principal Social Worker on this study, which commenced in September. The research team has secured ethical approval from the Faculty Ethics committee and HRA approval, and begun the first phase of data collection. The team has also worked closely with project advisors to co-produce a data collection tool for the second phase of the study.



Application of Research Projects

Val continues to be involved in the BCU Commonwealth project, working collaboratively with Teachers in Birmingham, teaching students to become young researchers.

In his role as Chair of the Deafblind International Acquired Deafblindness Network, Peter has worked with practitioners and those living with deafblindness to develop a programme of bi-monthly webinars on acquired deafblindness. These started in November 2021 and will run until October 2022.

Latest Publications

Simcock, P. (*forthcoming*) Developing our understanding of an impairment much misunderstood: Researching the experiences of deafblind people; in British Association of Social Workers (Ed) *'The Advancement of Social Work': Studies in Social Work to mark the 50th Anniversary of the Social Workers' Educational Trust*. Birmingham: BASW