

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

Newsletter June 2021

Introduction

Welcome to the first 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.

SWEPP began on Wednesday 16th February 2021 and will be formally launched on **10th November 2021**, as part of BCU Department of Social Work's 50th Anniversary Celebrations. The founding members' mapping report, describes the current research position in the department, and the short, medium and longer term goals of the group. Whilst these goals are informed by the expectations of the Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2028, the work of SWEPP is centred on the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW) definition of social work. Though 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. SWEPP members are now working on our BCU Research Group Website, where we can outline these aims and objectives, and showcase our work.

The **current members of SWEPP** are: David Collins, Dr Val Sylvester, Dr Colin Watt, Jess Wagner and Dr Peter Simcock.



Please read on to find out more about our work.

Funded Studies

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

Peter and Colin's application to the BCU Pilot Project Fund was successful and they have received funding for the above named study. Peter (Principal investigator) and Colin (Co-investigator) will be working in collaboration with the National Learning and Research Manager at Deafblind UK, a person living with deafblindness and a Principal Social Worker on the study, which will run from September 2021 to June 2022.



Non-Funded Studies

Direct Payments and Sign Language Users: A Scoping Review

Peter is currently working with Dr. Tracey Bone, University of Manitoba, Canada on a scoping review exploring the experiences of visual and tactile sign language users of direct payments. It is hoped that once complete, the scoping review will inform a future research grant bid.



Research Grant Applications

Colin has been invited to develop a bid to the Leverhulme small research grant fund with Dr Carolyn Blackburn (Principal Investigator) and Elaine Matchett (Co-Investigator) for a project exploring: '**Perceptions of challenging behaviour of children in Foster Care by social workers, foster carers and teachers** – working through challenges, resulting allegations and finding workable solutions'. The bid will be submitted in November 2021.

PhD Supervision

Colin will be the second supervisor for a PhD student on the Faculty's Graduate Research and Teaching Assistant (GRTA) scheme starting in February 2022. The topic of the PhD will be **Transitioning to school (reception year/early primary) in the context of Covid**, with a particular focus on EDI and the experience of 'vulnerable' children and families at risk of exclusion.

Application of Research Projects

Commonwealth Curriculum Project:

Val is currently working with Prof. Rob Smith, Professor of Education and Director of Research, as an advisor to the **Commonwealth Curriculum Project**, drawing on the findings of her PhD study exploring Senior African Caribbean Women's Migration Narratives.

Acquired Deafblindness Network (ADBN) 'Celebrating Everyday Contributions' Project:

Inspired by key findings from his PhD studies, Peter is leading on the Acquired Deafblindness Network's '**Celebrating Everyday Contributions**' project, which aims to showcase the capabilities of those living with acquired deafblindness. Working with partners across the Netherlands, Argentina, Russia and Switzerland, the project will launch on **30th June 2021**. Further information can be found here: <https://www.bcu.ac.uk/research/news-events/new-project-aims-to-celebrate-individuals-living-with-acquired-deafblindness>

Presentations / Conferences

In March 2021, Colin presented at the "Empowering Marginalised People to Protect themselves during the Pandemic and Future Crises" Conference, an online conference developed by the Social Work Departments at BCU, the Université de Saint Boniface, Manitoba, Canada and the University of Manitoba, Canada. His paper was entitled: "***And the end of all our exploring will be to arrive where we started and know the place for the first time***": ***Recognising "the duality at the heart of Social Work practice"***

In June 2021, at the invitation of the Family, Gender and Health Research Cluster, Val presented '***Visible Invisibly: Senior African Caribbean Women's Migration Narratives***', sharing insights from her doctoral research on senior African Caribbean Women's Post WWII US and UK migration narratives. This was one of the best attended presentations organised by the Family, Gender and Health Research Cluster.





'No Play today' by David Collins. Acrylic on Canvas. June 2020. This powerful painting accompanies David's piece published in *Social Work under Covid-19*; see details below

Latest Publications

Collins, D. (2020) 'Finding a place for art-informed approaches in social work practice education: a pilot study in the form of an experimental research workshop' *Practice: Contemporary Issues in Practitioner Education*. 2 (sup1): 23-37.

Collins, D. (2020) 'The Profession's Pièce de Résistance as an Act of Resistance: The use of Art in Social Work' *Social Work 2020-21 under COVID-19 Magazine* [online]; available at: <https://sw2020covid19.group.shef.ac.uk/2020/07/14/the-professions-piece-de-resistance-as-an-act-of-resistance-the-use-of-art-in-social-work/>

Bacchini, S. & Simcock, P. (2020) 'A Silent Majority, unheard and unseen? A reflective account of methodological and linguistic challenges in research with older people ageing with deafblindness' *Expressio*. 1(3): 147-166.

Simcock, P. & Manthorpe, J. (2020) 'Ageing with Deafblindness'; in M. Putnam & C. Bigby (eds.) *Handbook on Ageing with Disability*. London: Routledge.

Simcock, P. (2020) 'When Physical Distancing means Losing Touch: COVID-19 and Deafblind People' *Social Work 2020-21 under COVID-19 Magazine* [online]; available at: <https://sw2020covid19.group.shef.ac.uk/2020/06/02/when-physical-distancing-means-losing-touch-covid-19-and-deafblind-people/>

Simcock, P., Bond, J. & Duncan, L. (2021) 'Deafblindness – the psychosocial impact makes it core social work' *Professional Social Work* [online]; available: <https://www.basw.co.uk/resources/psw-magazine/psw-online/deafblindness-%E2%80%93-psychosocial-impact-makes-it-core-social-work>

Bacchini, S. & **Simcock, P.** (2021) 'Ageing, the Body and the Gender Regime: Health, Illness and Disease across the Life Course. Susan Pickard and Jude Robinson (eds.)' *Ageing & Society*. 41, 1449-1451.

Simcock, P. & Lee, C. (forthcoming) 'Disability and Social Justice'; in, C. Cox and T. Maschi (eds.) *Integrating Human Rights and Social Justice into Social Work Practice*. Abingdon: Routledge.

Watt, C. (forthcoming) 'Making sense of complexity: Using Thematic Analysis to understand the role of the Foster Carer'; in L. Tilly & B. Fox (eds.) *Understanding Health and Social Care Research: Methods in Context*. Abingdon: Routledge.



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