

Social Work Education, Policy and Practice (SWEPP)

Research Group

Newsletter November 2022

Introduction

Welcome to the third newsletter from the **Social Work Education, Policy and Practice (SWEPP)** Research Cluster. The aim of this newsletter is to let you know about the work of 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.



Current Activities

Colin has been appointed the '**Ethics Champion**' for the Social Work Department and a member of the HELS Faculty Ethics Committee. In these roles Colin will join a pool of research active colleagues in reviewing proposals for new research from across the Faculty.

The '**When Level 3 is not Enough**' BCU Pilot Project Funded study led by Peter and Colin, in collaboration with Deafblind UK, has entered its final phase of data analysis. Peter and Colin are now working with Deafblind UK on a future bid to fund a larger study building upon the findings from this project.

Peter is working with colleagues from the Department of Vision and Hearing Sciences, Anglia Ruskin University, practising clinicians and Deafblind UK on two studies in the deafblind field:

- **Awareness of Deafblindness/MSI amongst clinicians, teachers and social workers.** Principal Investigator: Dr. Saima Rajasingam (Lecturer in Audiology).
- **Accessibility of healthcare services for people with vision and/or hearing difficulties.** Principal Investigator: Dr Eldre Beukes (Senior Lecturer in Audiology).

Peter is continuing to work with Dr Tracey Bone, University of Manitoba, Canada on a scoping review exploring the **direct payment experiences of Deaf and Deafblind Sign Language Users.**

SWEPP New Members

Current members are delighted to welcome Simon Hall to SWEPP, who started EdD studies in September 2022. Simon is exploring how a storytelling approach might be utilised in order to change the perception and profile of the social work profession.

Current members are also delighted to welcome Fungisai Mushawa, who is undertaking PhD studies at Nottingham Trent University (NTU). Fungisai is exploring parenting practices amongst Black Sub-Saharan African Communities. Prior to joining BCU, Fungisai was Senior Lecturer and Course Lead at NTU. She is interested in fostering, child protection and issues affecting people from Black communities, and has co-authored publications in these fields.

A **very warm welcome** to Simon and Fungisai.



Presentations/ Conferences

May 2022: Val presented at the **Caribbean Studies Association International conference**. Val's paper was entitled: *Senior African Caribbean Women: A Feminism of Migration: The Power of Memory and Artefacts*.

June 2022: Peter gave a keynote speech at the **11th National Deafblind Conference, Fremantle, Australia**. The title of his speech was *'Deafblind People and Covid-19: a population impacted, yet making an impact'*.

October 2022: Jess' poster outlining her PhD studies was presented at the Connect Centre for international research on interpersonal violence and harm conference: **Effective Interventions to Prevent and Reduce Harm and Abuse, UCLAN, Preston, UK**.

October 2022: Peter presented at 'Embracing Change' **Deafblind UK Convention 2022**. The title of his presentation was *'Who is suitably qualified to assess the social care needs of deafblind adults?'* and reported on findings from BCU Pilot Project Funded study undertaken by Peter, Colin and Liz Duncan (Deafblind UK).

Book Chapters

Peter's two abstracts have both been accepted by the editors for inclusion in the *Oxford Handbook on Deafblindness Volume Two: Learning, Education and Support of Deafblind Children and Adults*: Oxford University Press (Eds. Hartshorne, T., Janssen, M., & Wittich, W.). The chapters are titled: Chapter 2: *Bridging the congenital –acquired divide: the experiences of those aging with deafblindness*; and Chapter 29. *A marginalized area of practice, with a marginalized population: what can the social work profession offer deafblind people?*



PhD Supervision

Colin is currently one of two second supervisors in a three-person supervisory team led by Dr. Carolyn Blackburn. The team are supporting a PhD student exploring **the experiences of young children with SEND starting (primary) school during the pandemic**.

Peter is the external adviser for PhD Student Claire Manford. Based at Anglia Ruskin University, the title of her study is '**Improving academic and social success for children with dual sensory impairment (deafblindness)**'. Claire's supervisors are Dr. Saima Rajasingam and Dr Eldre Beukes.

Val has taken on the role of **internal examiner** at Birmingham City University for doctoral students.

External Knowledge Exchange Activities

Val is an active member of the **University Race Equality Committee**.

Colin has been appointed as a key member of the West Midlands Social Work Teaching Partnership '**Research Development Group**'. This new initiative aims to: promote the **value of research** and evidence across the Partnership; equip practitioners with **tools and knowledge** to practice in an evidence-informed way; provide practitioners with **access to current and relevant messages** from research, with a clear focus on **application to practice**; strengthen links between academia and practice. The group has developed a **research guide for practitioners** and **held three successful seminars** showcasing new practice relevant research in the region.

Drawing on his research in the Deafblind field, Peter has provided advice on deafblindness and ageing to the **World Federation of the Deafblind**, advice on the professionalisation of guide communicators to the **Ministry of Labour in Romania** engaged in establishing a guide-communicator scheme, and advice to a local authority on the relevance of the Accessible Information Standard to deafblind people with social care needs. In November 2022 he will be presenting findings from his PhD to the **Finnish Deafblind Association**. In his role as Chair of the Deafblind International Acquired Deafblindness Network, he has developed a **second programme of webinars on acquired deafblindness**, which seek to support deafblind people, their families, and practitioners in the field. This second programme includes speakers from Colombia (Prof. Alberto Camacho), Australia (Dr Annmaree Watharow and Dr Moira Dunsmore) and Canada (Prof. Walter Wittich).

Latest Publications

Mushawa, F. (2022) 'Support and Protection across the Life course—A Practical Approach for Social Workers by Caroline McGregor & Pat Dolan (Book Review). *British Journal of Social Work*.
doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcac053

Simcock, P., Manthorpe, J., & Tinker, A. (2022) 'Vulnerability amongst Older People ageing with Deafblindness' *Journal of Social Work*. doi.org/10.1177/14680173221109447

Simcock, P., Manthorpe, J., & Tinker, A. (2022) 'A salutogenesis approach to ageing with impairment: the managing and coping experiences of older people ageing with deafblindness' *Ageing & Society*. 1-27. doi:10.1017/S0144686X22000083

Watt, C. (2021) '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.