Welcome

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter. We hope that these newsletters will keep you updated on new work, our latest publications and resources and other opportunities to engage with our research. I’m so proud of the work our staff do and am delighted to have the opportunity to share some of this with you. This month we profile a new publication on CSA in the family environment, a series of resources for professionals, and introduce you to our Young Researchers’ Advisory Panel. Do send us your thoughts on the content and what you’d like to see covered, and feel free to forward it on. You can also sign up for our mailing list to make sure you receive all future editions.

Dr Helen Beckett - Director

Latest Publications and Resources

Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Guide for Professionals
The DfE released new CSE advice for practitioners in February, which is a shortened and adapted version of a longer document written by the International Centre and Research in Practice. Our extended version of the guidance unpacks some of the more complex nuances of responding to CSE, including: interpreting the definition in practice; moving beyond a focus on vulnerability to consider the inter-connected conditions for abuse; the importance of context and the need to understand ‘constrained choice’; the challenges of current risk assessment processes and principles for working with children and young people affected by CSE.

Contextual Safeguarding Audit Toolkit
Auditing responses to peer-on-peer abuse helps agencies to recognise the different forms of abuse young people experience beyond the home, and supports practitioners to develop creative and holistic responses. This free online toolkit has everything an area needs to audit their own response to peer-on-peer abuse. There is an illustrated video on how to observe practitioner meetings with blank observation templates, an expert interview on doing focus groups with young people, and a handy checklist to complete as you go through each stage. All the resources are free and can be adapted to suit the needs of different sites and agencies.

Our Voices Too: New Network and Website for Professionals
The Our Voices Research and Practice Network was launched in March. The network aims to develop a better understanding of the value and ethics of participatory engagement with young people affected by sexual violence. The network provides an avenue for researchers and practitioners, working across Europe, to critically explore participatory research and practice, share learning and gain support. This work is being funded by the Oak Foundation through the Our Voices Too project. Visit the website to join the network, and to read more about the International Centre’s growing programme of work on young people’s participation.
Focus On – Making Noise

On April 20th, the Children’s Commissioner for England launched Making Noise: Children’s voices for positive change after sexual abuse, research undertaken by the International Centre in partnership with the NSPCC. The research responded to a gap in evidence from the perspectives of children and young people affected by child sexual abuse (CSA) in the family environment. The findings highlight how experiences of abuse touch every aspect of children’s lives including families, schooling, friendships and health, demonstrating that no one aspect of help-seeking and support can be considered in isolation. They also reveal pervasive barriers and delays to accessing professional support after the identification of abuse - with some groups of children at a particular disadvantage. The research made clear that challenging cultures of silence surrounding child sexual abuse in the family environment requires a society-wide shift in how we view and listen to children, and revealed that listening to children, knowing when and how to ask questions and involving them in decision making is critical for their protection.

“Your might not think much of telling anyone, you might not realise how serious it is, you might be just like it’s a one-off thing. Especially if it’s your family - you still feel like you want to protect them. That’s why it’s harder. You might realise that people aren’t supposed to do it [but] I think it all just comes back to it’s still your family really.” (IV40, Female 17 years)
Participatory Study with NSPCC
We are delighted to have been awarded funding from the NSPCC and ESRC to undertake a participatory study with young people who have experienced sexual abuse in adolescence. We will be working with the Association for Youth People’s Health and colleagues from the Institute of Public Health at the University of Bedfordshire to identify how young people can be better supported after such abuse. For more information please contact debra.allnock@beds.ac.uk

Harmful Sexual Behaviour in Groups
We have published a Rapid Evidence Assessment that synthesises existing literature on group harmful sexual behaviour (HSB), wider group offending and group interventions. The report identifies the gaps in existing research and considers how existing evidence could be applied and built upon to respond to young people who sexually harm peers in groups. The report can be accessed at the Contextual Safeguarding Network website

2017-18 Taught Masters Programmes - Recruiting Now
The MA International Social Work and Social Development and the MA Childhood and Youth -Applied Perspectives courses are recruiting now for an autumn start. Each is offered full-time for one year or part-time for two years.
- The MA International Social work course is aimed at social workers and those in related professions. It is an opportunity to learn about social work and social development around the world, from global and local perspectives. Enquiries: roma.thomas@beds.ac.uk
- The MA Childhood and Youth Studies: Applied perspectives is relevant to professionals in a wide range of settings working with children and young people. It offers skills and knowledge for practical application as well as reflection on legislation and policy. Enquiries: fiona.factor@beds.ac.uk

New Project on Contextual Safeguarding in Hackney
Hackney Council and the International Centre have been awarded Department for Education Innovation funding to develop a radical new approach to safeguarding young people within the community. The project will run over two years and see a contextual safeguarding framework applied to Hackney’s work with vulnerable adolescents. Read more about the project at the University of Bedfordshire website.

Subscribe to the International Centre Blog
The International Centre has a blog that is updated regularly where you can read ongoing news about our work. You can subscribe by clicking ‘Follow’ on the front page. Recent posts include:
- A summary of key findings from the evaluation of Nightwatch - a Barnardo’s project to raise awareness of CSE among night-time economy workers. Read the blog post
- IC associate member Sara Scott on a recent European knowledge exchange with CSE service providers from the Netherlands and Belgium. Read the blog post
- A report from a Learning Project on peer-group mapping in CSE cases, raising important questions about the ethics, opportunities and challenges of this practice. Read the blog post

Latest News

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More information can be found at our website https://www.beds.ac.uk/ic/professional-doctorate-and-other-study-opportunities

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You can visit our blog at the following link: www.uniofbedscse.com
Introducing – The Youth Researchers’ Advisory Panel

The Young Researchers’ Advisory Panel was established in 2016 in response to a desire to include young people in the work of the International Centre beyond the life-cycle of individual projects. The panel is made up of seven young people who are committed to developing research that improves outcomes for children and young people. The group represents a diversity of views and perspectives and is united by a commitment to the prevention of, and better responses, to sexual violence.

Members work in a professional capacity to support the work of the centre and improve the engagement of children and young people and wider communities in our research and dissemination. In addition the group will be helping us develop ideas and bids for new research, and evaluate and improve the model of the panel for future cohorts.

So far the panel has: informed a successful bid; attended and contributed to training; reviewed project materials; helped plan focus groups; written blogs and fed into our forthcoming new strategy.

Watch this space for further updates on what the panel are working on throughout the year.

The NWG conference
Debi Roker

The NWG conference at the end of March saw 300 practitioners, managers and policy-makers present and discuss new approaches, ideas and resources that can be used to address CSE. We ran a session on models of multi-agency working which surfaced interesting debate around the increasingly important role of commissioners of CSE services, effective multi-agency work and the rapidly changing role of the voluntary sector in providing CSE services. We’ll be saying more about these when we release our evaluation report on the use of the ‘Hub and Spoke’ model in providing CSE services in the autumn.

Overall, a good event, giving lots of food for thought!

What we’re reading
Joanne Walker and Lucie Shuker

We recently met up for lunch to discuss an article written by Maddy Coy of CWASU called ‘Joining the dots on sexual exploitation of children and women’. Coy argues that framing CSE as child abuse distances it from prostitution, which stops us from seeing the structural inequalites that connect these forms of exploitation. Coy makes a powerful case for gender being the key thread connecting these forms of violence across the life-course, so that ‘forms of abuse shade in and out of each other’. The article is a good reminder that although we can’t escape classifications of forms of violence these will always be limited and can have unintended consequences.

Thinking geographically
Jenny Lloyd

In August Carlene Firmin and I are hosting two sessions on contextual safeguarding at the Royal Geographical Society Annual Conference, London. The session will bring together researchers and practitioners engaging in original and challenging approaches to work with children and young people. We’ll be using the opportunity to explore how exploitation, violence and abuse are grounded within particular geographical contexts. Geographers have remained relatively absent from research on CSE, but there is a lot of appetite among practitioners for thinking about how the spaces and places in which abuse occurs are essential to planning intervention and prevention.