Welcome

Welcome to the second edition of the International Centre (IC) newsletter. It has been a busy time for us since our last newsletter - lots of exciting work and lots of new publications and resources. Hopefully this newsletter will give you a good flavour of what we’ve been up to but please check out our website for the full picture. As before, please feel free to forward this newsletter to others who might be interested. You can also sign up to our mailing list and blog and follow us on twitter to make sure you’re the first to hear about new work and resources. Thanks for continuing to journey with us...

Dr Helen Beckett - Director

Latest Publications and Resources

Two new books published by IC staff

‘Understanding and Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation’ was written by IC staff and edited by Helen Beckett and Jenny Pearce, drawing on the latest research evidence and academic thinking around CSE. You can find out more about the book and get a 15% discount on list price with code URCSE230 here.

‘Abuse between Young People: A Contextual Account’, written by Carlene Firmin, was published in December, demonstrating the interplay between different contexts in young people’s lives and how they influence the risk of abuse. You can find out more and order the book here.

New report on models of policing in responding to CSE

There is an absence of research into the strategic and operational structures of police responses to CSE and learning from inspections tells us little about the policing contexts within which they are set.

The International Centre carried out research with eight police forces to document examples of these structures and build evidence about how the police protect children.

The research report documents four observed models and considers how features of these models contribute to – or hinder – effective protection of children.

The contextual profiles of young people who sexually harm in groups

In 2017 the Contextual Safeguarding Team published a briefing outlining the characteristics of young people who display harmful sexual behaviours (HSB) in groups and/or alone. The paper presents the findings from a study carried out in four London boroughs and from our international literature review, highlighting the differences between young people who had sexually harmed in groups and those who had done so alone.

The publication provides a timely contribution towards deepening how HSB is understood and ensuring that the provision of services is sufficient for safeguarding young people.
Latest Publications and Resources

**CSE Principles Comic Postcards**

This set of postcards illustrates ten principles of working with children and young people affected by CSE. They are all illustrated by the artist Una, and were developed in collaboration with our Young Researcher’s Advisory Panel. The principles synthesise the findings of all research/participatory projects by the IC where young people shared their views and experiences of services. These images, and the accompanying text, bring to life the importance of sensitive practice with young people, and can be used in training to support the development of good practice. Visit the [website](#) to download the postcards for printing, share them online or download the powerpoint.

The comics project was part of the Alexi Project, which included a strand of work on the participation of children and young people in CSE services. You can find a range of related resources at the [website](#), including a literature review, webinar, conference report and short video.

**Focus On – The Alexi Project**

The Alexi Project was an £8m service development programme, which included the implementation of a ‘Hub and Spoke’ model, designed to rapidly increase the capacity and coverage of specialist, voluntary sector CSE services within England. Sixteen CSE services were funded for three years each, over a five-year period, with the aims of: making specialist support available to children and young people in a series of new locations; and improving the coordination, delivery and practice of local services responding to CSE – including police, children’s services and other partner agencies. A team within the IC evaluated the Hub and Spoke model, conducting 276 interviews with a range of stakeholders across the 16 sites, as well as case studies and quantitative data. The evaluation found that the voluntary sector has a distinct contribution to make to engaging young people through relationship-based and empowering practice. The Hub and Spoke model also helped to improve standards in local safeguarding by extending the reach of training and resources, and modelling the voluntary sector’s approach to casework.

**Evidence briefings are available on the following topics**

- The role of the voluntary sector in addressing CSE
- Voluntary/statutory partnerships in addressing CSE
- Outcomes measurement in CSE services
- Implications for new safeguarding arrangements
**Latest News**

**BASPCAN 2018**

A number of IC team members will be sharing our latest research findings at BASPCAN in April. We will be running two symposiums: one on addressing harmful sexual behaviours in schools and the other reflecting on participatory methods for engaging young people in research into sexual violence. We will also be presenting papers on policing and Contextual Safeguarding. We hope to see some of you there and look forward to learning from others across what looks like an exciting agenda.

**Our Voices Too: introducing our new partners**

As part of an Oak Foundation funded grant, Our Voices Too, the IC will begin work with three new partners in Eastern Europe. We are looking forward to working closely with Different and Equal based in Tirana in Albania, Atina based in Belgrade in Serbia and the National Center for Prevention of Child Abuse NCCAP/ CNPAC in Chisinau, Moldova. Each of our new partners has a long history of working with young people affected by trafficking, sexual abuse, exploitation and other forms of violence. Our new partners will be adapting the tools and processes developed through the LEAP project and working with Youth Facilitators and groups of young people to develop and disseminate sexual violence prevention tools and resources.

**Survey on safeguarding adolescents**

Staff in the IC have been working with the London Safeguarding Adolescents Steering Group to support the development of shared principles and enhance policy frameworks for safeguarding young people amongst London's key strategic bodies. As part of this work we conducted a survey of 120 London-based professionals on their views and experiences of safeguarding adolescents, which will inform a new chapter on safeguarding adolescents in the London Child Protection Procedures. The report is available at our Contextual Safeguarding website.

**Resources for schools on addressing HSB**

Resources to assist Inspectorates, multi-agency partnerships and schools to address harmful sexual behaviour (HSB) will be launched next month. The resources are developed from a project, supported by Ofsted, exploring the multi-agency enablers and barriers to addressing HSB in schools. Designed to contribute to the debate around sexual violence and harassment in schools, the research has identified four thematic areas: Structures and Systems, Prevention, Identification and Response and Intervention, that are key to an effective response.

**Learning from the experts**

The IC has been funded by the NSPCC and ESRC for a participatory, mixed methods study focused on supporting wellbeing following sexual abuse that occurs in adolescence. Stage one of the study involved a comprehensive literature review exploring: how young people conceptualise mental health and wellbeing; the impacts of sexual abuse in adolescence; and what an effective response should be. Findings confirm that the evidence-base is limited; that abuse in adolescence is rarely distinguished from abuse occurring at younger ages; and that perspectives of young people with these experiences are nearly absent. Short briefings covering the key topics will be published here in February 2018.
Update from the Young Researchers’ Advisory Panel

The Young Researchers’ Advisory Panel (YRAP) consists of a number of young people from varied backgrounds who all share a passion for raising awareness against sexual exploitation and violence. Over the last year the YRAP have been involved in a wide range of projects/tasks, whether that being individual input into a project or working on a task as a whole group. Such involvement included piloting young people’s workshops for a project exploring the mental health and wellbeing needs of young people after sexual abuse. This included offering first-hand experience of what worked well, how to improve and a general consensus of the structure of the workshop. Other roles included reviewing draft reports to offer a unique perspective, consulting on ethics processes to ensure the safeguarding of children and assisting with literature reviews. The YRAP have also launched the Alexi Project comics and presented at various conferences such as the Sexual Violence Research Initiative conference in Brazil and the Royal Geographical Society conference. The past 16 months have been very influential and empowering for the YRAP, and there is a mutual feeling within the members that these opportunities have increased the level of confidence and expertise of the group.

Abbie Rodgers (member of the YRAP)

Postcards from International Centre staff

What we’re thinking about

Helen Beckett
While at the Sexual Violence Research Initiative Forum in Brazil in the autumn, Silvie Bovarnick and I had the opportunity to attend a range of really interesting presentations around the relationship between faith and sexual violence. If this is something you’re working on, or interested in, we’d love to hear from you as we take forward our own thinking on this – drop me an email at helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk

You might also want to check out the work of the Joint Learning Initiative on Faith and Local Communities at https://jliflc.com/ if you’re interested in international perspectives on this issue.

What we’re reading

Delphine Girma
I recently read an article investigating mentees’ experience of peer mentoring in a service for young women affected by gang exploitation. The authors argue peer mentoring can have emotional, practical and interpersonal benefits for young people facing multiple vulnerabilities and can reach those often excluded from support services. Mentees made valuable recommendations, such as integrating resource-building activities in mentoring work through group and family support. The article gives us food for thought as we look forward to exploring different peer support models in CSE services as part of the Our Voices Too project.

Where we’ve been

Carlene Firmin
In late November and early December I spent two weeks with researchers and practitioners in New Zealand and Australia. A team of forensic psychologists at Griffith University, informed by situational crime prevention, have developed contextual interventions for working with young people who have displayed harmful sexual behaviours. This work has included peer group, school and community based interventions which complement the Contextual Safeguarding systems being developed at the University of Bedfordshire. We look forward to working with those we met in the future and are encouraged by the synergy of our two work programmes.