

CHILDREN'S RIGHTS

along the journey from victims to survivors

UK Dissemination Events June 2016

The UK team held two dissemination events in the UK. The first, a one-day conference, was held at UCLAN on 8th June 2016, and the second. A research symposium, was held at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London on 10th June. Both events, which were free of cost to attend, were publicised in advance via invitations, networks and social media, and participants live-tweeted about the events while they were underway.

The UCLAN Conference

This one-day event was hosted by the UCLAN team to disseminate the findings of the UK-based research team, and brought together experienced academics and range of stakeholder professionals and organisations working locally, nationally internationally within the field of children's rights, sexual abuse and victimisation. 61 delegates attended.

Organisations represented included the Offices of the Police and Crime Commissioners for Lancashire and Greater Manchester; Lancashire Police; National probation Service; Cumbria Police; HMP Forest Bank (Sodexo Justice Services); Victim Support (Including the Director of Children's Services for Victim Support nationally); the NSPCC and The Children's Society. A number of NGO's and professional therapeutic service providers participated, including Circle; Trust House Lancashire, The Liberty Centre, STEP OUT Oxford; Horizon; Compassionate Global Ltd, 5 Boroughs NHS Partnership Trust and Brook.

The format of the day included short networking breaks, and a longer period for a networking lunch. The programme combined presentations from academic speakers with participatory sessions to identify 'what we are doing well' and 'what we can improve', using feedback sheets. The event concluded with a live interactive session on future policies, which utilised the innovative PollEverywhere.com platform to elicit contributions in real-time from audience members, via mobile phones or tablets, which were then immediately displayed on the large screen and highlighted by the facilitator

in order to prompt further contributions. The powerpoint slides have been emailed to attendees and submitted for publication on the website, subject to permission by the presenter, and several of the presentations were video-recorded for conversion to edited podcasts with embedded slides.

The participants submitted feedback sheets at the end of the day, evaluating the organisation of the event, venue, and planning, and also the content and value of the sessions. The feedback sheets asked for qualitative as well as quantitative feedback, and these responses have been analysed so as to identify future avenues for the development of links between the university and practitioners. The participants in the event, along with those who took part in the initial informal discussions and focus groups, have since been approached with a view to developing a sustainable network for future research, policy and practice.

The conference was opened by Professor Stuart Hampton-Reeves, who is the Research Director of the UCLAN College of Business, Law and Social Science and also Professor of Research Informed teaching. He welcomed the delegates and outlined the background to the project.

The conference proceeded with presentations of the findings of the research by the UKIERI team members (Professor Helen Codd, Dr. Dianne Scullion & Professor Nigel Thomas) followed by contributions from Professor Lorraine Radford, Dr. Michelle McManus and Mr. Matthew Brooks.

Professor Helen Codd outlined the project aims, project rationale and research methods and presented the findings from the literature reviews and focus groups, identifying current gaps, examples of good practice and recommendations for future research, policy and practice. Dr. Dianne Scullion discussed what rights mean for children in the context of sexual offending, in the light of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, Scullion and considered implications for policymakers. Professor Nigel Thomas discussed the role that children's wishes and voices should have in the process of policy-making in response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, considering children's right to be heard.

Professor Lorraine Radford, Dr. Michelle McManus and Matt Brooks contributed interdisciplinary perspectives on sexual abuse, exploitation and sexual offending. Professor Lorraine Radford explored the extent of child sexual victimisation (globally, nationally and locally), in which she discussed the UN report on Violence against Children and the benefits and challenges of researching child sexual victimisation. Dr. Michelle McManus outlined and explained her research into perpetrators of offences linked to child abuse imagery, and the risk assessment tool which she developed in conjunction with

the police in order to more accurately assess risk of non-contact offenders committing contact offences. Matt Brooks presented the preliminary findings of his 'review of reviews' meta-analysis of research into 'what works' in helping survivors of sexual assault.

The conference provided the opportunity for the first public showing of the short (20 minute) version of the film 'From Victims to Survivors', produced by Courtney Deakin under the aegis of the project, and directed those interested in viewing the long version to the project website. The long version of the film includes not only dramatised scenarios but also interviews with professionals.

The final sessions adopted participatory methods to encourage delegates to contribute ideas from their own experience so as to identify current good practice, and areas which can be improved, using informal comments sheets (attached) and a 'live' audience participation web platform. These contributions will be used to inform the recommendations final project report, alongside the literature reviews and focus group reports.

The Institute of Advanced Legal Studies Symposium

Professor Helen Codd and Dr. Dianne Scullion led a 2-hour session at the Institute of Advanced Legal Studies of the University of London, on the afternoon of 10th June. The attendees included academic staff from London Metropolitan and Sheffield Hallam Universities, and a staff member from the Government Legal Service. Professor Codd and Dr. Scullion presented the findings, and explored the children's rights context, leading to a thoughtful and reflective response from participants as to appropriate policy and practice developments. Attendees from this event will be included in future initiatives aimed at building sustainable links with those who attended the UCLAN conference.