

## **Research Space**

Project report

**The state of social work education and research report 2020-2021**

**Melville-Wiseman, J.**

JOINT UNIVERSITY COUNCIL  
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION COMMITTEE

# The State of Social Work Education and Research Report 2020-2021.

DR JANET MELVILLE-WISEMAN  
CANTERBURY CHRIST CHURCH UNIVERSITY  
CHAIR OF JUCSWEC AND VICE CHAIR OF THE JUC



# Contents.

Welcome and Chair's Report	3	Aims and Priorities for 2020-21	10
Overview of the past year	3	Activities during 2020 -21	11
Future directions for social work education and research	3	Key issues, challenges and plans for 2021-2022	11
The future vision for JUCSWEC	4	State of Social Work Education Report (SSWER) 2020 Survey	11
Report from the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee	5	Survey aims and design	11
Biographies of the Co-Chairs of the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee	5	Summary of key take home points	12
Purpose of the Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee	5	Research	12
Activities during 2020-21	5	Submission to the Research Excellence Framework (REF)	13
Work with external organisations	6	Future work	13
Aims and Priorities for 2021-2022	6	Enhancing the global profile of social work and supporting global and international social work in teaching and learning	13
Report from the Research Sub-Committee	7	APPENDIX ONE	16
Biographies of the Co-Chairs of the Research Sub-Committee	7	Extracts from Commentary by the IASSW/IFSW on the Global Definition of Social Work	16
Purpose of the Research Sub-Committee	7	APPENDIX TWO	17
Aim and Priorities for 2021-22	7	IASSW's Message for Peaceful Engagement with Social Justice, Opposing and Condemning Racism, Discrimination and Violence	17
Activities during 2020-21	7	Challenging Racism against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma People and Communities	18
Work with external organisations	7	Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network (SWEARN)	19
Key issues, challenges and plans for 2021-22	8	The government Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England	20
Report from International Sub Committee	8	Responses to early on-line questions	20
Biographies of the Co-Chairs SWEC International Sub Committee	8	Letter to the Secretary of State for Education	21-22
Purpose of the International Sub Committee	9	Response from the Department for Education	23
Aims and Priorities for 2020 -21	9	CONFERENCES	24
Activities during 2020 -21	9	JSWEC2021	24
Work with external organisations	9	JSWEC2022 – Leeds Beckett University – 23rd and 24th June 2022	25
Key issues, challenges and plans for 2021	9		
Report from the Scotland Sub Committee	10		
Biographies of the Co-Chairs	10		
Purpose of the Scotland Sub Committee	10		

## Welcome and Chair's Report.

Welcome to this first State of Social Work Education and Research Report (SSWERR). It presents an overview of the work of JUCSWEC and its sub-committees from 2020-2021 as well as a summary of the outcome of our first survey of social work academics. I am grateful to the Co-Chairs of our sub-committees for their on-going hard work and commitment to the social work education and research communities across the four nations. I am especially grateful to Amanda Fitchett who as Vice Chair of JUCSWEC has been a particular support to me during this demanding year. We have shared the workload of many additional meetings in order to advise and support our membership during lockdown.

The report also presents information about the two groups that we have supported this year. The Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showmen and Boaters into Higher Education Pledge has been circulated to our membership and representatives from the group as well as the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Work Association hosted a network event at JSWEC2021. We have also been pleased to welcome colleagues from the Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network (SWEARN) and also provided them with an opportunity to hold a network event at JSWEC2021.

### OVERVIEW OF THE PAST YEAR

It has been a most extraordinary year for social work education and JUCSWEC. We began the first lockdown period in March 2020 in close communication with Social Work England in order to support them to provide the sector with advice on how to manage the implications of the lockdown. We were also in close contact through our Scotland Committee to capture cross nation learning for how to address some of the shared challenges. We were collectively able to consider the need for virtual placements and collate examples from our membership of how HEIs were addressing and resolving these challenges. In addition our role representing HEIs continued throughout the year including:

1. Social Work England
  - a. Education and Training Advisory Forum
  - b. Development of Professional Learning Outcomes Task and Finish Group
  - c. The establishment of Education and Training Standards for Approved Mental Health Professionals (AMHPs) and the forthcoming Approved Mental Capacity Professionals (AMCPs)

2. Department for Education
  - a. Children's Social Care Education Group
  - b. Review of Children's Social Care
3. Department for Health and Social Care
  - a. Chief Social Worker for Adults Research Advisory Group
  - b. Social Work Education Bursary Advisory Group
  - c. Chief Social Worker for Adults Advisory Group
4. Scottish government

Monthly meetings of the Social Work Education Partnership with representation from Scottish Government, the Scottish Social Services Council, employers and HEIs. Issues discussed and addressed include support for the continuation of practice placements during lockdown, and the plans for the establishment of a new National Care Service for adult social care

5. Scottish Social Services Council

Fortnightly meetings between the SWEC Scotland Committee and the Council to progress a range of issues including entry requirements for initial qualifying programmes, the introduction of a Newly Qualified Social Worker role and support, revisions to the teaching, learning and assessment framework, and flexibilities around how the Standards in Social Work Education are evidenced in placements during restrictions.

6. BASW on a range of issues including the PEPS Refresh (Practice Educators), QAPL, and liaison in relation to produce a joint statement on de-colonising/liberating the social work curriculum and anti-racist practice.
7. Local Government Association – Employer Standards Working Group
8. Association of Professors of Social Work including in relation to the early stages of the Independent Children's Social Care Review

### FUTURE DIRECTIONS FOR SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION AND RESEARCH

The pandemic has been the primary preoccupation of our work in the last eighteen months. However, it has also thrown into sharp focus the need to critically engage with wider issues of social inequalities and to find better ways of using our status as a Learned Society to influence these issues. We have seen the differential impact of COVID

on people from black and minority ethnic groups; care home residents and staff; and those living in the most economically deprived areas of the country. We have been aware of the mental health implications of isolation including for children. In all of these issues we remain committed to challenging inequalities, engaging with social work as a global profession and taking initiatives to shape as well as inform social work education and research. As already mentioned, we have been able to engage with a number of initiatives to take this agenda forward but are now looking to consult on a new vision for the future of SWEC.

### THE FUTURE VISION FOR JUCSWEC

JUCSWEC sits within the long-established charity and Learned Society – the Joint University Council (JUC). The JUC has two sectional committees – the Social Work Education Committee (SWEC) and the Public Administration Committee (PAC). A third sectional committee representing Social Policy left the JUC in 2005. The JUC celebrated its centenary in 2018 with an event called ‘States of Change’. This event drew on some of the history of the JUC and opened conversations about future directions. Professor Vivien Cree was one of the keynote speakers and subsequently published a paper and views on future direction for the JUC in *Social Work Education*<sup>1</sup>

Drawing on some of the issues raised by this paper, and the contemporary context of social work education and research, it is clear that the work of SWEC and the work of PAC have become increasingly divergent. Our membership is now significantly larger than PAC membership and our activities and direct work with government departments and others has also increased. As part of a single charity with PAC we do have a degree of autonomy, but would like to now explore whether the current model needs to be revised to provide SWEC with the best way to implement a vision for our future work. To that end we will be consulting with our membership over the coming months in order to capture as many views as possible on whether to stay in the current relationship with PAC or to increase our autonomy. We will do this through our sub-committees and present members of each committee with background thinking about a range of possible changes including:

- What is our shared vision for our future work including how we can better reflect and incorporate perspectives from our membership in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales as well as England
- What do we want to be able to achieve as a Learned Society
- What changes might be needed to current structures in order for us to continue to fulfil our legal obligations as a charity

In the meantime, the JUC is in the process of engaging with an external organisation to conduct a governance review of the charity and we will be participating in a number of exercises to support the above issues within that review. We will update our SWEC membership in due course.



**Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman**  
Chair of JUCSWEC

1. Cree VE. ‘States of change’? One hundred years of the JUC. *Social Work Education*. 2019 Nov 17;38(8):1054-1068. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02615479.2019.1627308>

## Report from the Learning and Teaching Sub Committee.

### BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB COMMITTEE

#### Amanda Fitchett

[Amanda.fichett@coventry.ac.uk](mailto:Amanda.fichett@coventry.ac.uk)



Amanda is an Assistant Professor in Social Work at Coventry University. She is a registered social worker who qualified in 1994 where her practice was focused on working with disabled children and child protection. Amanda moved into academia in 1997 at the University of Leicester where she was initially the Practice Co-ordinator and later, the Course Director. After the closure of the School of Social Work at Leicester she took up the position of the Course Director for the PG Cert Practice Education at Coventry University.

Amanda's key interest is Practice Education and the promotion of social work education. She is Chair of the West Midlands Regional Social Work Network, Vice- chair of SWEC, Chair of the West Midlands ASYE Regional Moderation Panel and an active member of the West Midlands Teaching Partnership.

#### Dr Pat Cartney

[patricia.cartney@manchester.ac.uk](mailto:patricia.cartney@manchester.ac.uk)



Pat is Head of Social Work at the University of Manchester where she holds responsibility for the leadership and delivery of the MA Social Work and the range of post-qualifying programmes, including AMHP and BIA. She is a registered social worker with over thirty years post-qualified experience. Her practice background was initially in hospital and generic social work, moving later to specialise in child and family social work. She subsequently worked for several years as a Senior Training Officer in the London Borough of Hackney Social Work Education Unit and in 1996 joined Middlesex University as a Senior Lecturer. She worked at Middlesex for twenty years and ended her time there as 0.5 Associate Professor in Social Work and 0.5 Director of Learning and Teaching for Mental Health, Social Work and Integrative Medicine.

Pat has a keen interest in adult learning and her research interests focus on exploring pedagogies for professional practice and social work education. She is a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy in recognition of her national role in learning and teaching. She is an active member of the Greater Manchester Social Work Academy Teaching Partnership.

### PURPOSE OF THE LEARNING AND TEACHING SUB-COMMITTEE

The focus of the work of the Learning and Teaching Sub-Committee is:

- > To be the HEI voice for social work education
- > To provide an information exchange opportunity where issues from our community of practice are fed into the different groups/ committees JUCSWEC Officers represent us at and feedback from these groups comes back to the membership
- > To explore and consider sector wide issues impacting on the provision of social work education at national, regional and local level
- > To provide a national forum to enable the sharing of good practice and problem solving strategies

### ACTIVITIES DURING 2020-21

The Committee remains vibrant with a core membership regularly attending and the move to on-line meetings due to Covid has enabled wider participation from members who have not previously engaged. We have changed the format from a business discussion in the morning and a more open forum discussion in the afternoon as we felt that a whole day on zoom is too tiring for all involved. This does, however, impact on the provision of opportunities to concentrate on deeper discussions of contemporary topics to which a speaker would usually be invited to present. We therefore need to review this as we move from 'crisis' mode to a more planned approach to the meetings in 2021

We did host one forum in February where one of our members presented her research. The focus was 'Contemporary Social Work Practice: The struggles of transforming yesterday's professional skill set.' One of our members was exploring learning and teaching issues

and how these were impacted upon by differences in how students were taught – whether via ‘traditional’ programmes or new fast track programmes. An interesting discussion took place about this research and its messages for Social Work education. This was particularly valuable as fast track programmes have been expanded without rigorous evaluation.

The Teaching and Learning committee became an invaluable arena for both gathering and disseminating information when the initial Covid lockdown began. We were able to ask members what pressing issues and challenges there were for Social Work education and use these to inform the weekly meetings that Janet Melville-Wiseman and Amanda Fitchett attended with Social Work England (SWE). We were able to ask members’ questions and raise their concerns with our registrar and this ensured that decisions by SWE were appropriately informed by the changes that were happening very quickly within HEIs. We were also able to act as a conduit in terms of providing answers and advice to members in a timely fashion – when they really needed quick and accurate information. We found that members valued this and frequently came to us to ask specific questions e.g. to assist their understanding about how best to respond to their student placement situation and what adjustments they could make to the placement assessments in light of Covid restrictions. This offered a new role for the Committee and one we would be keen to build further upon in the coming year.

Colleagues from around the country have contributed excellent examples of how they responded to challenges arising from the Covid crisis which we were able to share across the membership to assist many SW programmes that our members run.

Key areas that have been hot topics for discussion have been around the 200 placement days, the use of a blended approach of remote/simulated placements, and the need for flexibility regarding SWEG and bursaries and the safety needs of students on placement.

A major concern has been around the perceived inequalities of social work students on the range of social work programmes currently running. This includes some students being able to continue in placements during Covid when others have been withdrawn. Additional points at which this is problematic is in the planning of placements, particularly in Local Authorities where variations in contracts mean that fast track programmes and apprentices are given priority, leaving HEIs in many areas struggling to match students to placements.

## WORK WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

Amanda is currently involved with the BASW PEPS refresh implementation group and the group looking at quality assurance using QAPL on behalf SWEC. She also attends meetings with SWE and DfE in her joint role as Learning and Teaching Co-chair and SWEC Vice- Chair.

## AIMS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2021-2022

1. To provide an information exchange opportunity where issues from our community of practice are fed into the different groups/ committees JUCSWEC Officers represent us at and feedback from these groups comes back to the membership.
2. To provide a formal contact point for liaison with SWE and DfE.
3. To lobby for the interests of the profession, HEIs and our service users.
4. To offer a space for us to raise issues as a community of practice informally and to share issues of good practice, information and/or concerns collectively.
5. To be the HEI voice for social work education where other organisations can come to in order to seek expertise, consultation and information from social work educators ‘on the ground’.
6. To provide opportunities to share good practice and relevant research e.g. via regular forums.
7. To encourage and promote scholarly activity.
8. To provide opportunities to explore sector wide issues impacting on learning and teaching.
9. To liaise with the JUC Research and International Committees and to share ideas around learning and teaching.
10. To provide sector wide information on key topics and key learning.

**Amanda Fitchett and Pat Cartney Co-Chairs**

## Report from the Research Sub-Committee.

### BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CO-CHAIRS OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE

**Professor Hugh McLaughlin,  
Manchester Metropolitan  
University**



Hugh is a registered social worker who spent 22 years in practice as a social worker, manager and senior manager before entering academia. His research interests include service user involvement in education and research, critical professional practice and evidence informed practice.

**Professor Colette McAuley,  
University of Bradford**



Colette is an elected Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences with 14 years' experience in social work practice/management before entering academia where she has held three Chairs of Social Work. Her research interests include international child welfare outcomes and indicators of child well-being, with a particular interest in the voices of children in care, at risk and in poverty.

### PURPOSE OF THE RESEARCH SUB-COMMITTEE

The focus of the work of the Research Sub-Committee is:

- > To develop the quantity, quality and impact of Social Work research in HEIs and agencies in collaboration with the wider social work and social sciences community and experts by experience.

### AIM AND PRIORITIES FOR 2021-22

Following the launch of the Second JUC SWEC Research Strategy in autumn 2018 and considerable planning and engagement with stakeholders in 2019, our major priority for this year has been:

1. To arrange a meeting with a wide range of major stakeholders to work with us in taking forward its agreed objectives.
2. To develop an action plan to achieve the objectives.

### ACTIVITIES DURING 2020-21

The Research Sub-Committee planned to meet as usual three times during the year (normally February, June and November). However, as the result of COVID-19, we held meetings in February and November via Microsoft Teams. Our JUCSWEC Chair, Janet, attended the latter meeting. Colette and Hugh have also been very active in planning the 4 Nation Stakeholder Meeting in February 2020 and more recently meeting with Social Work Early Career Researchers/ Postgraduate Research Students representatives regarding support to create a Four Nation Network. We have also had two meetings with B.A.S.W. Head of Policy and Research regarding working together to support practitioner researchers. We also attend the Chief Social Worker (Adults) Research Advisory Group which currently occurs monthly. This year we also supported Janet in the nomination process for the Social Work and Social Policy REF Panel and the final composition was made public in December. Due to COVID-19, the REF submission date has been moved to the end of March 2021.

### WORK WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

The Research Strategy Stakeholders' Event took place at the Wellcome Collection Euston Road London on 13 February 2020, commencing with a networking lunch prior to a two-hour discussion. The meeting was very well attended with academic, research and service user representatives. This included research leads from; Social Work England, Social Care Wales, National Institute for Clinical Excellence, Making Research Count, Health and Social Care Board Northern Ireland and BASW. A service user and support worker from Shaping Our Lives also attended. Twenty-two university research leads from across the four nations were present. In summary, issues identified included:

1. the need for commissioning of new SW research based on agreed priorities
2. the need to raise SW research capacity and capability in academia and practice
3. to enhance SW research methods training at qualifying and post-qualification levels
4. to improve the integration of SW research into practice
5. to increase SW research-informed policy
6. to develop standards for the involvement of service users in SW research
7. to engage local authorities, ADSS and ADCS as well as service users in taking forward these developments.
8. to improve visibility and current relevance of SW research

The November 2020 Research Committee was very well attended and primarily focused upon developing the resultant Action Plan.



## KEY ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PLANS FOR 2021-22

### 1. Support for 4 nations postgraduate research students/ early career researchers.

Proposal for funding to be presented to JUCSWEC Committee on 7 January 2021 following discussion with the Chair (Completed)

### 2. Profiling the state of the academy in terms of contribution to REF 2021 returns.

Proposal for funding to be presented to JUCSWEC Committee on 7 January following discussion with the Chair (Completed)

### 3. Liaison with the Department of Health and Department for Education to establish responsibility for supporting Social Work Research

At our recent meeting with the Chief Social Worker's (Adults) Research Advisory Committee on 3 December, Mark Harvey responded to our concerns by suggesting he set up a group to specifically address SW research issues and was particularly pleased with the idea of a 4 Nation PGR/ECR initiative. At our request, he will also invite the Department for Education to participate and advise us on who we should liaise with on this.

### 4. Development of a range of SW research podcasts on our website

In terms of visibility and current relevance, we are considering the development of a range of podcasts/webinars which could be made available on the JUCSWEC website. Four nation coverage would be an important consideration. Another suggestion raised at the November Committee meeting was the establishment of a depository for SW research (hitherto held by SWAP) and an offer was made by Cardiff University to expand their current depository for this purpose. This idea will be explored further this year.

**Colette and Hugh**

## Report from International Sub Committee.

### BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CO-CHAIRS SWEC INTERNATIONAL SUB COMMITTEE

#### Dr Alison McInnes (University of Northumbria)

Email: [alison.mcinnes@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:alison.mcinnes@northumbria.ac.uk)



Dr Alison McInnes is Director of Transnational Education for the Department of Social Work, Education & Community Wellbeing at Northumbria University, Newcastle-Upon-Tyne. She is also the Programme Manager for the Childhood & Early Years Studies and Guidance & Counselling degree programmes delivered at Kaplan HE Institute (a Collaborative Ventures partner) in Singapore.

She has taught extensively in the United States, Singapore, Tajikistan and across mainland Europe and facilitates Teacher and Student Mobility Exchanges, as well as study visits. Her research interests include the intersections of international social work experience and social work education, child feeding practices in Sub-Saharan Africa, ageing and students' participation in alcohol use drinking games.

#### Dr Janet Walker (University of Lincoln)

Email: [jwalker@lincoln.ac.uk](mailto:jwalker@lincoln.ac.uk)



Dr Janet Walker is Deputy Head of School in the School of Health and Social Care, College of Social Science at the University of Lincoln. She is also the Head of Social Work, School Director of Teaching and Learning and International Lead within the School.

Janet has extensive experience of leading international projects, including Romania, Russia, Cyprus and with partners in mainland Europe, including the development and delivery of the Erasmus Mundus MA Advanced Development in Social Work, attracting social workers from all over the world. Her current work is supporting



the development of social work in Malawi. Her research interests include social work education; teaching and learning of social work in a global and local context; intersectionality and culture; practice learning in global social work; social work with children and social work with older people.

### PURPOSE OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUB COMMITTEE

The focus of the work of the International Sub Committee is:

- > We continue to focus on working to support the Global Agenda for Social Work (2012-2020) and the development of the Global Agenda for Social Work 2020-2030 to examine the UK contribution, and ways in which it could be potentially enhanced.

### AIMS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2020 -21

1. Strengthening the contribution of the UK Social Work University Community voice in the UK, European and International social work arenas.
2. Strengthening communication and seeking to engage the membership within the Sub Committee with all UK Universities. A **Twitter Account** for the International Committee of SWEC has been established @mcinnes\_walker
3. To review and engage a list of representatives from each university. A named person has been identified in each university and, where they may feel they are not the most suitable person to nominate an alternative person. This has been successful, and we currently have a core group of approximately 20 people systemically engaged with the International Sub-Committee. However, information is still provided to all on the International Sub-Committee list.
4. Promoting international social work; and
5. Promoting internationalisation of the curriculum.

### ACTIVITIES DURING 2020 -21

The International Sub Committee continues to meet twice a year (normally May/June and December), and hosted by different Universities throughout the UK. However, given the travel restrictions as the result of COVID-19, we had to host our meetings in May and December via Microsoft Teams. Smaller Teams meetings have happened throughout the year (mainly to discuss the Special Edition on Global Agenda for Social Work Practice, Education & Research for Practice: Social Work in Action).

### WORK WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

We have developed our links with the BASW International Committee (as UK representatives for IFSW), with a clear focus on working collaboratively to further the involvement and commitment in international social work. The Chair of BASW International Committee (Dr David Jones) attended the meeting of the SWEC International Sub Committee in December and Janet has attended the BASW International Committee meetings. In addition, we will be exploring: the development of a joint paper on international issues related to social work for social workers/social work academics, drawing on IFSW/IASSW and other sources to highlight current issues and promote social work as an international profession. We have also had our proposal accepted for Practice: Social Work in Action and Alison & Janet will guest edit this special edition with Dr George Palattiyil (our colleague on the International Sub Committee from Edinburgh University). A number of our colleagues from the committee will write papers in collaboration with their partners overseas.

Janet continues to represent the UK on the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) Executive Board and is now chair of the Human Rights and Social Justice Committee; the Nominations Committee and a member of the Women's Interest Group. Details of the work of the IASSW Committee and Sub Committees is circulated to the membership group and is discussed in the meetings. Less progress has been made in gaining access to the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) Committee, however Alison had a meeting planned late December 2020, with Teresa Bertotti (now former Chair of EASSW) & Femke Dewulf (representative for the UK from Belgium) to discuss strategic planning and how we can better represent the UK on EASSW. Alison also spoke at the EASSW Conference in June 2021.

### KEY ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PLANS FOR 2021

1. We will promote the importance of embedding international and global social work as a critical component of social work education, teaching, learning and the curriculum both at undergraduate, postgraduate, and post registration. This should be informed by the new Global Standards of Social Work Education and Training 2020 (IASSW/IFSW).
2. We will plan a joint event with members of the International Committee for World Social Work Day (WSWD), Ubuntu: Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness (16th March, 2021) <https://www.iasw-aiets.org/featured/5883-world-social-work-day-2021/> and with an opportunity to raise profile of international SW over the month of March.

3. We will plan a joint event with members of the International Committee to explore approaches to Decolonising the Curriculum.
4. The deadline for submission of the papers for the Special Edition on Global Agenda for Social Work Practice, Education & Research was 15th March 2021 & then we will need to peer-review and meet the target submission date of early 2022.
5. We will connect & engage and have the UK's views represented on the EASSW.
6. We will connect/engage with the Labour Party SW group in UK, to highlight social work challenges faced internationally.
7. It has been agreed that we will have one meeting a year via Teams & the other main meeting in person. We also planned a number of shorter meetings spaced out throughout the year on Teams, the first one in January 2021, then before Easter 2021. The next IC in person meeting is provisionally scheduled (COVID-19 restrictions permitting) for September 24th 2021, at Queens University, Belfast.

## Report from the Scotland Sub Committee.

### BIOGRAPHIES OF THE CO-CHAIRS

**Janine Bolger**  
(Robert Gordon University)  
Email: [j.i.bolger@rgu.ac.uk](mailto:j.i.bolger@rgu.ac.uk)



Janine Bolger is Head of Social Work at the Robert Gordon University, Aberdeen. She qualified in 1989 and practised in residential child care in the Bronx, New York and as an Assistant Principal in a residential special school in the Highlands of Scotland. She has also worked in Child Care and Protection in Moss Side, Manchester. Janine took up an academic position at Robert Gordon University in 2001. Her research interests relate to the experiences of care experienced children and young people and the evaluations of teaching practices. Janine has also contributed to academic writing about social policy and the law and assessment processes and practices. She is a member of the Scottish Government sponsored Social Work Education Partnership and the Social Work Services Strategic Forum in Scotland.

**John Devaney**  
(University of Edinburgh)  
Email: [J.Devaney@ed.ac.uk](mailto:J.Devaney@ed.ac.uk)



John Devaney, PhD, is the Centenary Professor of Social Work at the University of Edinburgh, and Head of Subject. He qualified as a social worker in 1988 and practised in Northern Ireland in services for children and adults with learning disabilities, and then statutory children's services, until taking up his first academic position in 2006 at Queen's University Belfast. His research interests relate to child maltreatment, domestic abuse, the impact of adversity in childhood across the life course, and evaluations of interventions. He took up his current position at the University of Edinburgh in January 2018. He is a member of the Scottish Government sponsored Social Work Education Partnership.

### PURPOSE OF THE SCOTLAND SUB COMMITTEE

The Committee's remit includes, but is not limited to:

- > policy developments relating to social work, social work education and social work research in Scotland, across the UK and internationally
- > working in partnership with users of services, students, professional bodies, employers, regulators, policy makers and other key stakeholders to maintain high standards in qualifying and post qualifying social work education, and social work research in Scotland
- > generating and disseminating new knowledge
- > promoting social work and high standards in social work practice
- > supporting social work academics in Scotland in relation to networking and career development

### AIMS AND PRIORITIES FOR 2020-21

1. To continue to support the Social Work Education Partnership in addressing challenges surrounding the provision of sufficient numbers of high quality social work placements
2. To provide opportunities for continued collaboration between the nine providers of social work education in Scotland in relation to both education and research
3. To introduce a national approach to the support of newly qualified social workers
4. To provide support for career development of social work academics across Scotland

5. To support the development of the new National Care Agency
6. To participate in discussions around a new Centre of Excellence for Social Work Research in Scotland

## ACTIVITIES DURING 2020 -21

The Committee has met on six occasions over the past twelve months. The current pandemic has understandably become the main focus of co-ordination and collaboration between academic institutions, social work agencies, the Scottish Social Services Council (SSSC) and Scottish Government, with the recently established Social Work Education Partnership (SWEP) being the central means through which significant efforts have been made to support students to complete their studies, while also ensuring that sufficient numbers of students are graduating on time to meet workforce needs.

While the pandemic has impacted on other workplans, for example, in relation to newly qualified social workers, progress continues to be made, such as in the commencement of the new standards in social work education from September 2020.

## KEY ISSUES, CHALLENGES AND PLANS FOR 2021-2022

1. Continue to collaborate with SWEP and SSSC to ensure that all students continue to remain on course for the completion of their programmes of study on time.
2. The development and piloting of simulation in relation to practice learning.
3. In conjunction with the SSSC to finalise the national model of support for newly qualified social workers.
4. In collaboration with SWEP to develop the regional partnership arrangements to support social work education in Scotland.
5. In collaboration with Scottish Government to support the development and roll out of a new National Care Service.

## State of Social Work Education Report (SSWER) 2020 Survey.

**Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman**  
**Kerry Ramsbotham**

### SURVEY AIMS AND DESIGN

For the first time JUCSWEC decided to conduct a survey of the experiences of academic colleagues across the four countries of the UK. The aim was to raise the profile of academics and highlight the challenges they faced, particularly in this last most extraordinary year. We also wanted to better inform our work with, and alongside, key organisations within the social work education sector. We were able to utilise a small amount of JUCSWEC funding to employ a research assistant to undertake the survey and analyse the results which are presented here. The project was given a favourable opinion by the Canterbury Christ Church University Faculty Ethics Panel and the survey disseminated via our membership lists, @JUCSWEC Twitter account and other networks. It also acted as a pilot for us to assess the usefulness of such surveys and to be a parallel source of information for our membership within our annual and other reports. Initial findings were presented at the Social Work England Social Work Week in March 2021 alongside a survey conducted by Dr Terry Murphy and Dr Alison MacInnes, and work to mark World Social Work Day - Dr Janet Walker and Dr Alison MacInnes (Co-chairs of our International Committee). A copy of the presentation can be found using this link:

<https://sway.office.com/EL3rIEpwFd1l8rPK?ref=Link>

Seventy-seven people completed the questionnaire from a range of HEIs from England, Scotland and Wales. We were disappointed not to capture the views of our colleagues in Northern Ireland and will look to ensure wider inclusion in further surveys.

The survey was organised in four sections. Part One asked about the profile of academics working in social work education. Part Two asked about the Higher Education Institution (HEI) or organisation and their students. Part Three asked about financial issues and Part Four asked about practice related issues, current challenges and for good practice insights.

## SUMMARY OF KEY TAKE HOME POINTS

- > Social Work Academic careers are supported by rich and meaningful social work practitioner careers, particularly within children and families' teams
- > More respondents reported being satisfied by teaching and research elements of their work than administration and management
- > Social work education is delivered across a diverse range of schools and departments including health, social care, social justice, psychology, sociology and education
- > These departments are located within a range of social science and medical schools and a range of faculties across the humanities, social sciences, law and health and education
- > Most programmes within this sample are delivered within teaching intensive universities (71%)
- > 70% of the respondents from England are part of a funded Social Work Teaching Partnership<sup>1</sup>
- > For respondents from England, student bursaries and the Education Support Grant (ESG) were viewed essential but inadequate including in the allocation and administration<sup>2</sup>
- > A range of views were expressed as to the quality of response by institutions to the current Covid-19 pandemic, just over half of respondents felt the response had been as well as could be expected under unprecedented circumstances (54%) and others felt organisations were slow to adapt.
- > 60% of respondents felt blended learning had positives aspects offering flexibility for both students and academics. 22% reported they would like to carry forward virtual meetings as time and cost saving practices and 11% reported they liked the opportunity to choose to work from home, for both students and academics with competing activities such as childcare and to reduce travel and costs.
- > A number of drawbacks were referred to including the dominance of screen time, the blurring of private and public spheres and the importance of preserving face-to-face teaching and the centrality of relationships within the field of social work. 7% cautioned unnecessary over-reliance on remote practices.
- > 70% of respondents were disappointed with the level and quality of support offered by social work regulators (although there were no respondents representing

Northern Ireland), and where respondents were more positive, open channels of communication and valuing relationships were thought to be central to working together effectively.

- > 59% of the 61 respondents commenting on JUCSWEC reported favourably, expressing gratitude and appreciation for the lobbying and representation for social work education. However, 41% of respondents were unaware of the work JUCSWEC do.
- > A number of examples of best practice were shared including mentoring schemes, staging dialogues on and offline within student cohorts and networking further afield. The opportunity to share best practice, to discuss challenges and successes was seen as something to develop into the future.

## RESEARCH

We were keen to seek views on support to undertake research within academic roles as a steppingstone to our next survey on involvement with the Research Excellence Framework (REF). Sixty respondents reported they are required to undertake research as part of their role; 56 respondents reported being supported to conduct research within the last two years and 19 stated that they were not expected or supported to undertake research. We asked respondents who were supported to identify the range of ways this support happened in their day-to-day work.

### Support for research

	YES	No
Workload time	43	12
Mentoring	26	20
Internal funding	32	20
Conference attendance	41	13
Other	5	12

58 respondents also reported that they are currently pursuing a research degree. We also asked the number of HEIs supporting practitioners to undertake research degrees including PhDs, Professional Doctorates or Masters by Research Degrees. 67 respondents answered yes to this question and 10 answered no.

1. Funded Social Work Teaching Partnerships are only part of social work in England

2. Funding of social work education is different in the four countries of the UK with student bursary provision being available only for students ordinarily resident in England and studying in either England or Scotland. Likewise the Education Support Grant paid to HEIs to support placement provision and service user involvement is an England only provision.

## SUBMISSION TO THE RESEARCH EXCELLENCE FRAMEWORK (REF)

The REF is the process whereby the quality of research being undertaken in UK HEIs is measured and assessed. The exercise is undertaken every few years and was last undertaken in 2014. It should have been completed in 2020 but was postponed to 2021 due to COVID. The assessment process requires HEIs to submit information about published research by staff and a number of other factors influencing the quality of research within each HEI environment. These outputs are then assessed by subject area panels appointed by the REF. JUCSWEC was able to make nominations for the Social Work and Social Policy Panel. In some HEIs the number of members of social work academic staff may have been too small for them to be submitted to the Social Work and Social Policy Panel but that does not preclude their work from being submitted to other panels with connections to social work. These panels are called Units of Assessment (UOAs). However, we wanted to ascertain the extent of this given the number of social work programmes within HEIs, where the school or faculty is dominated by health.

At the time the survey was undertaken (January 2021) 31 respondents reported being on track to be entered for the REF and 27 reported they would be submitted under the following UOAs.

UOA20. Social Work and Social Policy	22
UOA3. Allied Health Professions	4
UOA21. Sociology	1

## FUTURE WORK

JUCSWEC remains committed to capturing the views of those directly involved in the provision of social work education and research. The survey provided an initial snapshot and helps us to consider our wider work to address some perceived misconceptions particularly in relation to social work academics and their connection to practice.

The next survey will give us an opportunity to gain greater insights into the Research Excellence Framework (REF) and the role of JUCSWEC to support research as well as education within our sector and we will report on this in due course.

# Enhancing the global profile of social work and supporting global and international social work in teaching and learning.

## JUCSWEC INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE

**Dr Janet Walker**  
(University of Lincoln)

**Dr Alison McInnes**  
(University of Northumbria)

(Joint Chairs International Committee)

## 1. OVERVIEW

The JUC SWEC International Sub Committee has a focus on prompting social work as a global profession and in representing and prompting the voice of the global social work community through key global and international associations and bodies. It upholds the global definition of social work

*Social Work is a practice-based profession and an academic discipline that promotes social change and development, social cohesion, and the empowerment and liberation of people. Principles of social justice, human rights, collective responsibility and respect for diversities are central to social work. Underpinned by theories of social work, social sciences, humanities and indigenous knowledges, social work engages people and structures to address life challenges and enhance wellbeing.*

(Definition of Social Work adopted in 2014, by the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Federation of Social Work (IFSW)<sup>3</sup>

3. See Appendix One for IASSW/IFSW Commentary to support the Global Definition of Social Work

The International Sub Committee members works together to support internationalisation within the social work curriculum, within qualifying and post qualifying programmes and through social work research. Its aims and priorities are:

- I. Strengthening the contribution of the UK Social Work University Community voice in the UK, European and International social work arenas.
- II. Representation, contributing to and supporting advocacy, change and campaigning in relation to international and global issues for social work.
- III. Promoting international social work.
- IV. Promoting internationalisation of the curriculum.
- V. Supporting decolonization of the curriculum, including issues of equality, diversity, and inclusion.
- VI. Strengthening representation, communication and seeking to engage the social work academic community within to support the work of the subcommittee with all UK Universities.

## 2. JUCSWEC INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE VISION AND MISSION STATEMENT

As Social Work educators and researchers we have a central role in teaching, promoting, representing, and challenging global and international dimensions of the voices and experiences of citizens, service users and carers and communities across the globe. This includes enhancing the role of social workers as being peacemakers through dialogue, including knowledge and skills, for example, in communication, conflict resolutions, negotiation, mediation. It recognises all social work educators and researchers commitment to education, learning and research that highlights social workers unique contribution and situates social work education and research as imperative in highlighting, evidencing and challenging the violation of human right and centrality of social justice, including issues of anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice. This includes emphasising the contribution to and for social work, situating social work education and learning and research as highlighting and seeking to represent and address at a micro and macro levels of practice.

Equality, diversity and inclusivity are central values for practice, recognising the oppression and discrimination on individuals and groups and the social work role and responsibility in challenging and changing this. This includes a commitment to **decolonising the curriculum** and approaches to teaching and learning. Social work

consists of multiple local practices, but local conditions are intertwined with global processes of change beyond the national level. Social workers need to actively participate, learn from others, and be involved in social work solidarity action for promoting global justice and against the consequences of global problems. **Social work's commitment to active, complex and multifaceted community and professional engagement was at the core of the World Social Work Day 2021 and will continue into future years.**

We acknowledge that **individuals, families and communities are increasingly facing a series of challenges locally and globally.** This includes a concern for a global economy that is in disarray; socio-economic and political systems that are unable and/or unwilling to create inclusive societies and transformational policies; displacement and environmental disasters; along with the conflicts that tear communities apart. Power is unevenly distributed, with corporate power increasingly seeming to influence every sphere of human activity and at times limiting the ability of states to support their residents. **The Covid-19 pandemic** has thrown into sharp relief the weaknesses of our global system, including the vulnerability of certain groups, especially Black and Minority Ethnic communities and those individuals in lower socio-economic groups; under-funded and uneven health care systems, lack of social protection, lack of preparedness, socio-economic exploitation and **deepening cracks in international cooperation and solidarity.** Consequently, the most vulnerable people in our societies are struggling to stay safe, and to meet their most basic needs.

We recognise and can see worldwide **how communities are rising to these challenges**, working together in reclaiming their voices, the power and their place to work together to decide on shaping their communities and the environments they live in, and demanding the care and services they are entitled to.

## 3. INTERNATIONAL COMMITTEE: SITUATED IN THE WIDER INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY

The JUC SWEC International Committee recognises and fully supports the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW), having representation on the IASSW Executive Committee. This includes full involvement in all aspects of the work of IASSW, with the current representative as chair of the Human Rights and Social Justice Committee (with direct links to the representative for social work education at the United Nations (UN)<sup>4</sup>, Nomination Committee and as a representative on the Women's Group.

4. See Appendix Two for the IASSW's Message for Peaceful Engagement with Social Justice, Opposing and Condemning Racism, Discrimination and Violence

The International Committee also has direct links with the European Association of Schools of Social Work (EASSW) and other related international social work and social work education bodies and organisations, including the International Association of Social Workers (IASW) and other regional representatives for social work education, for example, African Association of Schools of Social Work (AASSW).

## CURRENT PROMOTION OF GLOBAL ISSUES INCLUDES:

### (i) Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development

After a first common agreement in 2012, the International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW), the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) and the International Council of Social Welfare (ICSW) adopted in 2020, a **Global Agenda (2030)** for Social Work and Social Development. This initiative provides a **common basis for joint action addressing the major challenges of our societies** and identifying relevant social issues for our profession and beyond. **The Global Agenda** is a strong commitment to **promote anti-racist and anti-discriminatory practice, social and economic equality, the dignity and worth of people, and environmental and community sustainability**. The JUC SWEC International Committee has contributed its voice to the development of the Global Agenda.

The Global Agenda for Social Work and Social Development (2020-2030) first theme for 2020-2022 is *Ubuntu, Strengthening Social Solidarity and Global Connectedness*. Within the Ubuntu philosophy, the

importance and value of **the human being (*munthu*) and the community are pivotal**. The Ubuntu philosophy which is founded on the African framework has applicability to social work on a local and on a global scale because of its values that are based on human relationships - solidarity, compassion, generosity, mutuality and commitment to community. As a social work community, we see ourselves as bound in similar interconnected struggles as our international colleagues, neighbours and fellow human beings to address the socio-economic, political, health and well-being challenges that impact on people, globally, nationally and locally. The recognition and **celebration of World Social Work Day embodies our commitment to our global profession, the importance of solidarity and the need to work in partnership for the benefit of all humankind**.

### (ii) Global Standards for Social Work Education

The International Federation of Social Workers (IFSW) and the International Association of Schools of Social Work (IASSW) have jointly updated the Global Standards for Social Work Education and Training. ([Global-standards-for-the-education-and-training-of-the-social-work-profession.pdf \(iassw-aiets.org\)](https://www.iassw-aiets.org/global-standards-for-the-education-and-training-of-the-social-work-profession.pdf)) The International Committee promotes and support inclusion in the social work curriculum of the principals of the Global Standards.



## Appendix one.

### Extracts from Commentary by the IASSW/ IFSW on the Global Definition of Social Work

#### Core Mandates

... The social work profession recognizes that interconnected historical, socioeconomic, cultural, spatial, political and personal factors serve as opportunities and/or barriers to human wellbeing and development. Structural barriers contribute to the perpetuation of inequalities, discrimination, exploitation and oppression. The development of critical consciousness through reflecting on structural sources of oppression and/or privilege and developing action strategies towards addressing structural and personal barriers are central to emancipatory practice where the goals are the empowerment and liberation of people.

#### Principles

The overarching principles of social work are respect for the inherent worth and dignity of human beings, doing no harm, respect for diversity and upholding human rights and social justice. Advocating and upholding human rights and social justice is the motivation and justification for social work. The social work profession recognises that human rights need to coexist alongside collective responsibility. The idea of collective responsibility highlights the reality that individual human rights can only be realised on a day-to-day basis if people take responsibility for each other and the environment, and the importance of creating reciprocal relationships within communities. Therefore, a major focus of social work is to advocate for the rights of people at all levels, and to facilitate outcomes where people take responsibility for each other's wellbeing, realise and respect the inter-dependence among people and between people and the environment.

Social work embraces first, second and third generation rights. First generation rights refer to civil and political rights such as free speech and conscience and freedom from torture and arbitrary detention; second generation to socio-economic and cultural rights that include the rights to reasonable levels of education, healthcare, and housing and minority language rights; and third generation rights focus on the natural world and the right to species biodiversity and inter-generational equity. These rights are mutually reinforcing and interdependent and accommodate both individual and collective rights.

In some instances "doing no harm" and "respect for diversity" may represent conflicting and competing values, for example where in the name of culture the rights, including the right to life, of minority groups such as

women and homosexuals [SIC], are violated... Such an approach might facilitate constructive confrontation and change where certain cultural beliefs, values and traditions violate peoples' basic human rights. As culture is socially constructed and dynamic, it is subject to deconstruction and change. Such constructive confrontation, deconstruction and change may be facilitated through a tuning into, and an understanding of cultural values, beliefs and traditions and via critical and reflective dialogue with members of the cultural group vis-à-vis broader human rights issues.

#### Knowledge

... The International Definition for social work definition acknowledges that social work is informed not only by specific practice environments and Western theories, but also by indigenous knowledges. Part of the legacy of colonialism is that Western theories and knowledges have been exclusively valorised, and indigenous knowledges have been devalued, discounted, and hegemonised by Western theories and knowledge. The proposed definition attempts to halt and reverse that process by acknowledging that Indigenous peoples in each region, country or area carry their own values, ways of knowing, ways of transmitting their knowledges, and have made invaluable contributions to science. Social work seeks to redress historic Western scientific colonialism and hegemony by listening to and learning from Indigenous peoples around the world. In this way social work knowledges will be co-created and informed by Indigenous peoples, and more appropriately practiced not only in local environments but also internationally.

#### Practice

... From an emancipatory perspective, this definition supports social work strategies that are aimed at increasing people's hope, self-esteem and creative potential to confront and challenge oppressive power dynamics and structural sources of injustices, thus incorporating into a coherent whole the micro-macro, personal-political dimension of intervention. The holistic focus of social work is universal, but the priorities of social work practice will vary from one country to the next, and from time to time depending on historical, cultural, political and socio-economic conditions.

(Available from: [Global Definition of Social Work — IASSW-AIETS.org](https://www.iaassw-aiets.org))

## Appendix two.

### **IASSW's Message for Peaceful Engagement with Social Justice, Opposing and Condemning Racism, Discrimination and Violence**

*IASSW opposes and condemns racism, discrimination, intolerance and violence in all its pernicious and evil forms, and condemns those governments, quasi-governments and individuals who perpetrate racism, discrimination and support intolerance and violence.*

*We condemn racist acts and people or industries that make and sell the weapons and other equipment that allow terrorists to carry out their violent intentions. Our condemnation does not change according to country, race, ethnicity, religion, or other circumstance. IASSW does support robust conversations undertaken in goodwill to address and resolve injustices around the world that have grown from years of oppression, colonialism, and religious and economic hegemony. The history of discrimination and oppression, however, cannot in any way justify contemporary violence and acts of terror and racism which can only perpetuate the oppressive cycle of violence, and do nothing to advance social justice or peace. The great religions of the world only advocate peaceful resolution of conflict and complaints. Social work educators also teach peaceful engagement for social justice in our classrooms, support it in our research, and are prepared to engage with anyone of goodwill who is interested in addressing and resolving historical or modern grievances with the goal of social justice and an end to racism and oppression in all its forms.*

(Available from: [International Association of Schools of Social Work \(IASSW\) \(iassw-aiets.org\)](https://www.iassw-aiets.org))

# Challenging Racism against Gypsies, Travellers and Roma People and Communities.

**Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman**



JUCSWEC has supported the work of the newly formed Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Work Association (@GRTSWAssoc) this year as part of our strategy to show solidarity with groups working in key areas to challenge racism and which has a direct relevance to JUCSWEC and our membership. We have also promoted the Gypsy, Travellers, Roma, Showmen and Boaters into Higher Education Pledge and this piece outlines the reasons why we should be encouraging our HEIs to sign this pledge. We have also supported a network event on these issues at our annual conference this year @JSWEC2021.

The barriers and discrimination faced by GRT social work service users is of serious concern as well as that experienced by GRT social workers and academics. Hostility is also evident in government and the plans to imminently introduce an offence of 'intentional trespass'. This 'cleansing' is aimed at Traveller communities who are often denied access to legitimate temporary or permanent sites by local authorities breaking the law on site provision.

But some things are changing thanks to pioneering work undertaken by Margaret Greenfields – Professor of Social Policy and Community Engagement and colleagues at Bucks New University (BNU). I recently attended their launch event of the Gypsy, Traveller, Roma, Showman and Boater Communities (GTRSB) into Higher Education Pledge. This pledge can be undertaken by any HEI to support access to higher education for GTRSB communities in all subject areas. At the event we heard from a number of key influential people including Baroness Janet Whittaker who chairs the All Part Parliamentary Group (APPG) for Gypsy, Traveller and Roma communities; Kate Green MP Shadow Education Secretary; Chris Millward Director of Fair Access and Participation at the Office for Students; and Professor Julia Buckingham President of Universities UK.

However, we were also privileged to hear from a number of GTRSB speakers who shared their own personal stories of discrimination and barriers to education. Their stories were shocking, moving, and heart-breaking, but often inspirational.

So, what are the facts and how are such barriers experienced?

At best 3-4% of GTRSB people aged between 18 and 30 years are able to access higher education. This falls to 2% at the intersection with socio-economic deprivation and being working class. This compares to 43% of that age group in the general population. We also know that only 16% of white pupils receiving free school meals go on to higher education. We regard that as a worrying statistic so 2-4% for a different group should be even more troubling. We know, and have known for a long time, that if you have, what still has to be described as the 'privilege' of higher education, it opens up a whole range of additional life opportunities with the subsequent positive impacts on your overall life and wellbeing. But we heard that for a GTRSB man, who has not been able to access higher education, there is *'no life other than to be hated upon'*.

We also heard that lecturers do often include available data on GTRSB students. However, when asked once why the numbers are so low in higher education, one lecturer replied *'it is because traveller families do not send their children to school'*. It can be difficult for traveller families to access mainstream schooling for a number of intersecting factors but the cutting of the specialist traveller education support services in 2010/11 has not helped this. But the real barriers are systemic and rooted in racism. We also heard from a woman whose family have been showmen for over 300 years. She described how her mother (now in her 50s) does not have her own front teeth as they were knocked out by other children throwing stones at her when she was as a child walking to school. We also heard from GTRSB students and academics who often feel too uncomfortable to self-identify in their academic settings.

So how can things change here? Signing up to The Pledge would be a good start. It contains key change areas that do not take many resources and come with a 'light touch' monitoring of progress:

- > Work towards creating the most appropriate and welcoming environment and conditions in which GTRSB students can stay resilient and thrive academically and personally.
- > Establish a named contact point for GTRSB students and potential students.
- > Identify and publicise the support for GTRSB students already in place (or under development), which engage the key areas of the Pledge:

- Data monitoring of GTRSB student and staff numbers;
- Building a supportive and welcoming culture for GTRSB students;
- Outreach and engagement to local GTRSB communities and
- Inclusion, Celebration and Commemoration of GTRSB cultures and communities.

There is no fee to sign up to the pledge so we have to ask why we would not want to do this. Further detail and guidance can be found here: [GTRSB into Higher Education Pledge | Buckinghamshire New University \(bucks.ac.uk\)](#) including links to key research.

## Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network (SWEARN).

JUCSWEC has been pleased to support the work of SWEARN and welcomed presentation of their work at our Learning and Teaching Committee, Research Committee and at a network event at JSWEC2021.

### SWEARN Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network

#### 1. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The Anti-Racist Social Work Education Group was set up in 2014 but has re-formed in 2020 as **SWEARN** to promote the principles followed by the Black Lives Matter movement. Members of the Group are established social work academics and are committed to the historical ideas set out in the Black Perspectives publications produced in the 1990s. They are, however, keen to update research evidence and enable the development of strategic policy and practice on anti-racism.

SWEARN is a forum in the first instance and acts as a:

- > **hub** where experiences of anti-racism and anti-discrimination can be shared and developed between all social work academics and students;
- > **place** where Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) social work academics in the UK can meet to explore mentors, sponsors and other means of support; and
- > **collective voice** which provides a formal response to reports, reviews and policies on social work education.

#### 2. MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to colleagues who are interested in strategic changes to educational structures, systems, processes and procedures in UK higher education. There is a core membership of approximately 20 senior leaders of social work education who regularly meet and agree priorities. There are also approximately 30 additional colleagues who receive information and maintain contact with Kish Bhatti-Sinclair who holds membership details, co-ordinates activities and sets up/hosts on-line meetings. Core list of members is attached.

#### 3. STRATEGIC AREAS FOR DEVELOPMENT

- > Representation: BAME students and academics
- > Data: gaps, actions and sharing
- > Standards: equality gaps, professional coherence and consistency
- > Communication: transparency and engagement
- > Students: journey, voice and engagement
- > Student registration: interim measures and arguments to support full registration
- > Research: evidence to inform policy and practice on race and racism

#### 4. RECENT ACTIVITY

An agreement has been reached with Colum Conway and Sarah Blackmore for 3 meetings per year with SWEARN to discuss strategic contributions to Social Work England (SWE) policy and practice on race and racism. SWEARN membership on the SWE Committees:

- > Education and Training Advisory Group – Kish Bhatti-Sinclair
- > Task and Finish Group – Vida Douglas and Edith Lewis
- > National Advisory Forum – Applications will be made by Bridget Ng'andu and George Dake

# The government Independent Review of Children's Social Care in England.

When the government announced a review into Children's Social Care we gathered as many preliminary views as possible in order to send a response outlining our initial concerns. We had been in discussions with our colleagues in the DfE and determined to raise the concerns we had directly with the Secretary of State but to also remain engaged in discussions with our membership and, where possible, the review team. We submitted some early responses which are copied below as well as the letter and its response. We were invited to an initial short meeting with a civil servant member of the review team and were promised a follow up meeting but have not heard anything since. We were also disappointed that the response to our letter was only forthcoming after sending two requests for a response, and that it does not answer our concerns.

## RESPONSES TO EARLY ON-LINE QUESTIONS

### 1. Who should I prioritise speaking to? Naming specific people or organisations would be helpful.

In addition to a wide range of experts by experience please include specifically Professor Anna Gupta - Chair of the Association of Professors of Social Work (APSW). I am Chair of the Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC) and we work closely with APSW in the promotion of social work education and research and represent the social work academy.

### 2. How best should I engage children, young people and families who have experienced children's services?

The discourses around this review matter. For example, it has highlighted statistics using a stigmatising deficit model (%homeless, %in prison, %not in higher education). This is not a good start. Instead, it could have given primacy to the important contribution experts by experience have made to other reviews, make as professionals in the field. You could have identified what they say about their experiences and how they would like things to improve. The rationale for the review might then have focused on structural inequality rather than perceived individual failures of either care experienced people, their carers or social work services.

### 3. What should I be reading? Links to books, blogs, documents, or studies welcome.

This is an unrealistic question and will not lead to the review being evidenced based. Do you have a team of experienced researchers who know how to undertake a systematic review of evidence or are your researchers used to just doing searches? Even if we were to provide you with some references how would you access them? You need to partner with esteemed academics to pull this together for you. For example are you aware that if you do a Google Scholar search on Children in the UK Care System it brings up 3,820,000 papers. The Cochrane Library has 28 Cochrane Reviews just on children and mental health. Appreciate you are not academic, but you seem to need some guidance on how to review evidence. We advise that you do not involve academics who lack independence from you or Frontline in order to establish better credibility as 'independent'.

### 4. What are the big questions I should be asking as part of the review?

You will need to address the already tangible fall out from your personal appointment and how you are not seen by many as a credible, knowledgeable, or independent chair. However, other issues include to what extent do structural inequalities, poverty and cutbacks in services impact on children's experiences before, during and after receiving care. To what extent has the reduced ability of front line social workers to work therapeutically and in a preventative way led us to the position we are in today with such poor outcomes for children, young people and their families and a divisive society that promotes competition and narrow definitions of success ahead of sensitivity to vulnerability and everyday struggles to have basic needs met. The other issues are to what extent intersections with health, mental health services for children and young people and their families, have an impact. Finally, intersectionality as an overarching dimension should be considered and is not evident in the ToRs. For example, you should take account of gender inequalities alongside being inclusive of ethnicity and variability. To what extent do structural inequalities, poverty and cutbacks in services impact on children's experiences before, during and after receiving care.

### 5. Who should I prioritise speaking to? Naming specific people or organisations would be helpful.

1. JUCSWEC
2. APSW - We can put you in touch with the co-chairs

### 6. What are the big questions I should be asking as part of the review?

How to ensure it is evidenced based in light of the advice above

## Letter to the Secretary of State for Education.

**The Rt Hon Gavin Williamson CBE MP**

House of Commons  
London  
SW1A 0AA

22nd February 2021

Dear Secretary of State

We are writing to you as representatives of the social work academy to express our concern about the unfolding tensions relating to the Children's Social Care Review. The Joint University Council Social Work Education Committee (JUCSWEC) is a Learned Society formed in 1918 and our membership includes the majority of universities that provide or validate the full range of social work education in the UK including fast track programmes. We work closely with the Association of Professors of Social Work, your colleagues in DfE with responsibility for social work education (copied in) and with UK wide regulatory and professional bodies. We host the largest national and international annual social work education and research conference in the UK. We welcome a review but are deeply concerned about the process of forming the Experts by Experience Panel and the appointment of the current Chair. We are all agreed that change is needed within the children's social care sector but the level of tension generated is now calling into question the integrity of the review and the validity of any outcomes and we believe this warrants your urgent attention.

### **Independence**

For such a review to be effective the Chair must not only be independent but have the confidence of stakeholders that she or he is independent. Clearly Mr MacAlister has a long history of close connections with DfE including obtaining large amounts of funding from you for his Frontline project. The criticism of his lack of independence, including from care experienced communities, the academy and other prominent people in practice has been profound and extensive. His responses from his current Twitter feed have, sadly, tried to sweep these aside. However, his lack of knowledge of the meaning or importance of independence or the hurt that has been caused is astounding. For example one Tweet from him states:

*"A few suggest that because I've secured government funding for charitable programmes I won't be independent. By this logic, those in LAs, academia or elsewhere who secure public funding for projects would fail the independence test*

*If that's the logic then fair enough but I ask that those who are sceptical to judge me by my actions. Helping to get children a decent and fair start in life has been the focus of my career and that's what will drive this review" (18th January 2021)*

He is of course correct that if an academic or other proposed chair had received similar levels of funding for their *individual* projects from DfE then they also would not be perceived as independent. However, there are many highly experienced academics, judges or others who have never received such individual funding and who would have a better understanding of why independence, and perceived independence is crucial.

We have asked questions about the launch event. However, we noticed that in her reply to written questions about this, Baroness Berridge stated that Cardiff University and the University of Kent were invited as organisations. Please confirm that those invitations were sent to the respective Vice Chancellors of those universities rather than to two individuals based there who have or had a direct involvement in the delivery and/or evaluation of the Frontline programme. Either way it is inexplicable that JUCSWEC, as the representative of HEIs who deliver social work education in the UK, was not invited. This sends a very powerful message about independence of both this review and the current evaluation of Frontline.

<https://questions-statements.parliament.uk/written-questions/detail/2021-01-20/HL12395>

The criticism of this appointment was predictable given Mr MacAlister's lack of engagement with the wider sector, and his previous lack of judgement in making hurtful and divisive remarks on the superior quality of students who go through his Frontline Training Organisation.

### **Experts by Experience Panel**

It is particularly worrying to see how some care experienced communities are being adversely affected by the approach to forming the Experts by Experience group. Their key voices will simply not be heard and there have been examples where their original hurt experienced within the system has been triggered. Imbalances of power and the 'deficit' model are emphasised in the narrative. For example, the ToRs highlighted how many care experienced people received custodial sentences rather than how many currently support social work practice and education. Also, people were invited to 'apply' to be 'selected' for the panel. This is a reinforcement of the lack of power care experienced people often feel in the care system and prior to entering care. There were better ways of doing this.

A more recent Tweet from the Chair states:

*I understand everyone is eager to know more but it defeats the point of handing power to the Experts by Experience Group if I take big decisions like this before they are in place. (16th February 2021)*

This means he sees himself as having all the power at the moment, which he will then hand over to those he has chosen. Unfortunately this is the antithesis of good social work practice in relation to power imbalances. A good social worker would be striving to remove structural barriers to the reclamation of power in care experienced people to support their full participation in the review.

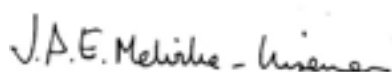
### **Knowledge and experience**

Mr MacAlister's career has been very short and his only even possibly relevant experience has been in a minority elite social work training provider and then for only 7 years as Chief Executive. He has never experienced the frontline of practice or taken time to improve his knowledge of the mainstream evidence base of social work by engagement with the experienced academy. Equally, he does not have the experience that a senior judge would have in collecting convergent and divergent evidence, synthesising and weighing evidence, listening to witnesses and promoting justice. In essence, Mr MacAlister does not appear to have the experience or skills to manage the complexity of this task if it is going to be inclusive and effective.

Our starting point is to urge you to immediately reconsider this appointment and consider a senior academic, judge, or other respected individual who can bring the sector together for this important review rather than continue to cause tensions and upset.

However, we are aware that the chair is unlikely to resign in the face of current criticism. We suspect that you are unlikely to reconsider this appointment. Our advice is therefore, and we urge you, to require him to have a more experienced and credible Co-Chair, regular mentoring about his personal style and approach to evidence and power dynamics, and a consultative group of highly experienced independent people to act as 'critical friends' to the review. We will of course engage with the Chair as soon as he makes contact with us to address our initial concerns. However, we have vast experience within our membership, including eminent researchers and authors on subjects expected to be included in the review. In addition, our recent survey of social work academics highlights the depth and breadth of experience social work academics bring from their many years of social work practice and management as well as personal connections to children's social care. We therefore expect to be fully consulted in a meaningful, transparent and systematic way. We have consulted our membership and will not change our commitment to engagement but anticipate this will not be easy unless some of these issues are addressed.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman**  
Chair of JUCSWEC – on behalf of:

Co-Vice Chairs of JUCSWEC  
**Amanda Fitchett**  
**Professor Sam Baron**

Co-Chairs of JUCSWEC  
Committees  
**Professor Colette McAuley**

**Professor Hugh McLaughlin**  
**Dr Pat Cartney**  
**Dr Janet Walker**

**Dr Alison McInnes**  
**Professor John Devaney**

# Response from the Department for Education.



Department  
for Education

Ministerial and Public

Department for Education

Communications Division

Piccadilly Gate  
2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Store Street  
Manchester M1 2WD

Tel: 0370 0002288  
[www.gov.uk/contact-dfe](http://www.gov.uk/contact-dfe)

Dr Janet Melville-Wiseman

Our ref: 2021-0014288

Dear Dr Melville-Wiseman

Thank you for your letter of 22 February, addressed to the Secretary of State regarding the recent launch of the independent review of children's social care. I have been asked to reply on his behalf. I apologise for the delay in sending you a response.

As you are aware, the government launched this widescale review of children's social care, to take a fundamental look at the needs, experiences and outcomes of the children it supports.

Josh MacAlister was asked to lead the review. Josh was the founder and chief executive of Frontline, a charity set up to recruit, train and support high potential graduates and career changers to become social workers. Before that, he was a teacher, so he brings a wide range of experience in different sectors and he understands the issues facing some of our most vulnerable children and young people and their families. It is common practice for independent reviewers to be directly appointed based on their expertise. Whilst the lead reviewer will ultimately make a final set of recommendations, this will be on the basis of extensive consultation with other groups and individuals with lived experience of children's social care, whose voices should be heard.

The launch event of the review was hosted by the Secretary of State and did not form part of the review's evidence gathering. There will be a range of opportunities for everyone with an interest in the review to contribute. In particular, the Call for Advice has provided an opportunity for anyone with an interest to provide advice to the reviewer. Alongside, the Call for Evidence has sought to identify academic and professional research and advice, including information from past reviews and local practice knowledge, to help ensure the review is considering the most appropriate research and analysis. More information on both can be found on the review's website, here: <https://childrensocialcare.independent-review.uk/>.

Individuals and organisations are encouraged to get in touch with the review. Where individuals have further contributions to make, or did not find the calls for advice and evidence the best way to engage, they can also contact the review team directly by emailing [Review.CHILDRENSSOCIALCARE@education.gov.uk](mailto:Review.CHILDRENSSOCIALCARE@education.gov.uk).

This is a once in a generation opportunity to transform the children's social care system and improve the lives of children and their families. The lead reviewer wants this review to be a transparent and iterative process and aims to regularly share thinking for feedback and input. We hope that all those with an interest in children's social care seek to engage with the review to generate the best set of recommendations possible to improve the system for the children who need it most.

Thank you for writing about this important matter. I hope this reply is useful.

Yours sincerely

Children's Social Care Division

Web: <https://www.education.gov.uk>

Twitter: <https://www.twitter.com/educationgovuk>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/educationgovuk>



# Conferences.

## JSWEC2021

We have just concluded a really successful JSWEC2021 and our thanks go to Professor Jonathan Scourfield and the team at Cardiff University for excellent hosting of the event. The conference had been delayed by a year due to the pandemic and moved to a free on-line event for the first time in our history. However, there were many aspects of the conference that were enhanced by it being on-line including accessibility for a larger number of participants worldwide. Our thanks also to Harry Venning for live cartooning throughout the two days.

There were four key note plenary sessions this year:

### 1. Reclaiming the role of the 'social' in the care and support of older people.

Alisoun Milne – Chair - Lorna Stabler



Alisoun Milne is Emeritus Professor in Social Gerontology and Social Work at the University of Kent, where she worked for over 20 years. Before a career in academia, she was a social worker in two local authorities in London. Her research interests cover four intersectional topics: social work with older people and their families; mental health in later life; family caring; and long-term care.

### 2. Alliances between universities and service users.

Jadwiga Leigh, Emma Green and Clare Western Chair: Dan Jones



Emma Green is a peer mentor for the New Beginnings Project.

Clare Western is a parent on the New Beginnings Programme.

Jadwiga Leigh is Senior Lecturer in Social Work at the University of Lancaster and Director and Programme Lead of New Beginnings. Her research has mainly focused on professional identity

and organisational culture in child protection, in the UK and in Belgium. New Beginnings aims to deepen mothers' understanding into who they are through the telling and sharing of personal histories. It was inspired by the Flemish organisation 'Stobbe'.

### 3. Social Work and Politics

Mark Drakeford, Hilary Armstrong, Julie Morgan – Chair Jo Warner



Mark Drakeford started his career in probation and youth justice, before running a community project in Ely, Cardiff. He was an academic in Swansea, then Cardiff Universities, becoming Professor of Social Policy and Applied Social Sciences in 2003. During

this time, he was co-editor of the British Journal of Social Work. He became Labour Assembly Member for Cardiff West in 2011 and then, after several ministerial posts, First Minister of Wales in 2018.

Hilary Armstrong was MP for North-West Durham 1987-2010. During her parliamentary career, she spent two years as Minister for Housing and Planning and four years as Minister for Local Government, before joining the Cabinet as Chief Whip. She is a former social worker and lecturer at Sunderland Polytechnic. In 2010, she became a member of the House of Lords and is also a member of the Joint Committee on the Draft Domestic Abuse Bill.

Julie Morgan is Deputy Minister for Social Services in the Welsh Government. Before fulltime politics, she was a social worker in Barry Social Services and then an Assistant Director in Barnardo's. She was first elected as Labour Member of Parliament for Cardiff North in 1997 and has been Assembly (now Senedd) Member since 2011, becoming the minister with social care responsibility in 2018.

#### 4. Intersectionality and social work education.

##### Claudia Bernard Chair: Abyd Quinn Aziz



Claudia Bernard is Professor of Social Work and Head of Postgraduate Research in the Department of Social, Therapeutic and Community Studies at Goldsmiths, University of London. Claudia Bernard is a qualified social worker, with child and family practice experience. Her interests include gender-based violence, critical race theory,

child abuse and neglect, as well as equality and diversity issues in social work education.

In addition there were 37 panels which included over 100 paper presentations with one in the Welsh language with simultaneous translation; 5 symposia; 13 poster presentations; 9 fringe events; network events hosted by the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller Social Work Association and the Social Work Education Anti-Racist Network; and a new initiative first meeting of the Four Nations Social Work PhD network chaired by our research committee Co-Chairs Colette McAuley and Hugh McLaughlin.

The final plenary session included the launch of JSWEC2022 introduced by Janet Walker Co-Chair of our International Committee.

#### JSWEC2022 – LEEDS BECKETT UNIVERSITY – 23RD AND 24TH JUNE 2022



I am very pleased to announce that a Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between JUCSWEC and Leeds Beckett University to host JSWEC2022. I would like to thank Lorraine Agu at Leeds Beckett and Dr Janet Walker and Dr Alison MacInnes for their work to establish the MoU in time for an announcement at JSWEC2021.

This Conference will have a focus on how social work and the people and communities we work with are responding to the social challenges and opportunities in contemporary society. Throughout the Conference the intention is to review and consolidate the crucial role that social work and social workers play in social, economic and political transformation to support inclusive and healthy societies, seeking to assist and empower people, particularly through our work with vulnerable people and communities, and contribute to the provision of essential services. We recognise that individuals, families and communities are increasingly facing a series of challenges locally and globally. The Covid-19 pandemic

has thrown into sharp relief the weaknesses of our global system, including the vulnerability of certain groups, especially Black and Ethnic Minority communities and those individuals in lower socio-economic groups; under-funded and uneven health systems; lack of social protection; lack of preparedness; socio-economic exploitation and deepening cracks in international cooperation and solidarity. Consequently the most vulnerable people in our societies are struggling to stay safe, and to meet their most basic needs. Social Work has a critical role in working together with others in reclaiming their voices, in shaping their lives, communities and the environments they live in and demanding the care and services they are entitled to.

Please follow us @JUCSWEC and @mcinnes\_walker for updates on the planning.

We will now begin the negotiations to secure the host for JSWEC2023 and hope to continue our plan to take the conference to the four nations and different regions of the UK.

**Janet Melville-Wiseman**  
Chair of JUCSWEC

**Janet Walker**  
Co-Chair of the Organising Committee for JSWEC2022



Published by the Joint University Council for the Applied Social Sciences 2021.

Cartoons used with permission and copywrite Harry Venning <http://www.harryvenning.co.uk/>