

INTERNATIONAL CENTRE FOR THE STUDY OF SEXUALLY EXPLOITED YOUNG PEOPLE

The University of Bedfordshire

Rationale

This is the first international research centre with an exclusive focus upon scholarship in the area of the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and young people. There is increasing concern in government and welfare and justice agencies about problems associated with the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and young people. This Centre aims to develop an international dialogue between academics, practitioners and policy makers who share these concerns.

A strong portfolio of work into issues relating to the sexual exploitation and the trafficking of young people is taking place within the University of Bedfordshire. Associates of the centre have generated innovative research, training and consultancy in this area and the centre will serve as a focal point for the further development of this work.

The International Centre for the Study of Sexually Exploited Young People has links with a range of organisations working in the field. Centre members have active working links with some of the major children's charities, with the police and government departments in the UK and abroad. We are developing research and training in partnership with these agencies looking at the trafficking and sexual exploitation of children and young people.

Topics currently being researched include, 'Young people and trafficking: a research project into practitioners definitions of responses to trafficking', the use of 'Creative Writing' as a research technique with trafficked and sexually exploited young people in the UK', 'Violent youth gangs membership and sexual exploitation' and 'Problem drug use, sexual exploitation and prostitution'. This work will continue whilst new projects and initiatives are developed in collaboration with institutions and organisations in Britain, mainland Europe, Asia and other countries abroad.

Centre Objectives

1. To develop research, training and consultancy in the area of the sexual exploitation and trafficking of young people at a local, national and international level.
2. To reduce and eliminate the sexual exploitation of young people by supporting enquiry into local and global contexts within which the sexual exploitation and trafficking of children and young people occurs.
3. To encourage and facilitate international collaboration for the development of coordinated and effective multi-agency and multi-national theory, policy and practice pertaining to the sexual exploitation and trafficking of young people, campaigning on the rights of sexually exploited and trafficked young people.
4. To develop an information bank of specialists from the UK and abroad who are able to offer advice on all aspects of the sexual exploitation and the trafficking of young people, encouraging forums where specialists work together to improve policy and practice for sexually exploited and trafficked young people.
5. To run Continuing Professional Development (CPD) and training events, collaborating with UK and international agencies to facilitate, run and accredit training programmes on the sexual exploitation and trafficking of young people.
6. To host a specialist (on line and centre based) library on trafficked and sexually exploited young people holding:
 - Copies of annual reports and relevant publications from projects in UK and abroad working with trafficked or sexually exploited young people.
 - Academic publications and relevant research in this field.
 - Evaluations of practice.
 - Relevant policy documents.
 - One-off papers on work with sexually exploited and trafficked young people.

7. To establish and manage a website giving:

- Information on meetings, events, including training events and conferences on young people, trafficking and sexual exploitation.
- Copies of annual reports/information of research and other materials as held in the specialist library.
- Relevant policy documents from national and local government in the UK and abroad on young people, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Topics currently identified for Consultancy, Continuing Professional Development (CPD), training and Research.

- Young people, sexual exploitation and child protection.
- The relationship between sexual exploitation, the forced movement of young people and problem drug/alcohol use.
- International perspectives on sexual exploitation, trafficking of children and young people and the 'missing young people' agenda.
- Geographical patterns of forced movement of young people a) internal trafficking within the UK and b) trafficked young people from abroad into the UK.
- UK Peer pressure and gang networks, relationship with sexual violence and sexual exploitation.
- Accessing hard to reach young people – for project work and for research.
- Protecting children, prosecuting abusers and upholding children's rights.

Current Centre Associates

The Centre will be based in the Institute of Applied Social Research at The University of Bedfordshire.

The head of the Centre, **Professor Jenny J Pearce**, is chair of the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People; a voluntary organisation housed at Bedfordshire University supporting staff within the UK who work with sexually exploited and trafficked young people. She is on the sub committees of the UK Human Trafficking Centre for 'Research and Education'. Her research includes studies of safeguarding sexually exploited young people, trafficked young people and the development of young people centred accounts of exploitation.

Prof. David Barrett is an internationally recognised authority on children and adolescents exploited through prostitution and has published extensively in this area. He has worked with the *Children's Society* to bring about change in law and policy in this contentious area and has advised the Cabinet on these issues.

Dr. Margaret Melrose, Reader in Applied Social Studies has researched the topic of sexually exploited young people for a number of years and has published extensively in the fields of child and adolescent drug use and prostitution. These studies have been externally funded by The Joseph Rowntree Foundation, The Home Office and The Children's Society. She has evaluated provision for young people involved in commercial sexual exploitation and produced empirical evidence showing why and how young people become involved.

Prof. John Pitts is an internationally recognised authority on youth crime and youth justice. He is editor of the *Community Safety Journal*, a member of the editorial boards of *Youth Justice and Juvenile Justice Worldwide* (UNESCO), a patron of Safer Society (Nacro) and *Associate Editor of Youth and Policy* (NYA). He is a board member of the *Safer Luton Partnership*, *East China University of Politics and Law*, *Shanghai*, and the *University of Tartu, Estonia*.

Current Associate membership

Dr Ravi Kohli is recognised internationally as an authority in the field of children involved in forced migration seeking sanctuary in western industrialised nations. His research has focused on the ways social workers can respond to their needs and capabilities in organising welfare services that result in effective resettlement.

International Associates

Kimberly A. McCabe, Ph.D. Dean of the School of Humanities and Social Sciences, Lynchburg College, Virginia, USA.

Tappio Kurre of The Finnish Institute Centre
for Legal Policy.

Dr Judit Strumpl, The University of Tartu,
Department of Social Work, Estonia.

RECENT PUBLICATIONS INCLUDE

Books:

Pearce, J.J. (forthcoming) *Working with Sexually Exploited Young People*, Falmer, Routledge
Pearce, J.J. & Phoenix, J (eds) (forthcoming) *Prostitution and Community Safety*, Bristol, Policy Press
Pearce, J.J (with Thom, B. and Sales, R. eds) (2007) *Growing Up with Risk*, Bristol, Policy Press
Kohli, R (2006) *Social Work with Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children*. Palgrave Macmillan
Bateman, T. & Pitts, J (eds) (2005) *The RHP Companion to Youth Justice*, Russell House, 2005
Melrose M. & Barrett D (eds) (2005) *Anchors in Floating Lives: Models of Good Intervention Practice*, Russell House Publishing, Lyme Regis.
PearceJJ (2003) *It's Someone Taking A Part Of You: a study of young women and sexual exploitation* National Children's Bureau
Barrett D. (ed) (2000) *Youth Prostitution in the New Europe*: Russell House Publishing, Lyme Regis.
Brown A & Barrett D (2000) *A Knowledge of Evil*, Willan Publishing, Devon.

Chapters in Books:

Kohli, R (forthcoming) *Practitioner stories*, in Kohli, R & Mitchell, F (eds) *Social Work with unaccompanied asylum seeking young people: issues for policy and practice*. Palgrave Macmillan
Kohli R (forthcoming) Unaccompanied asylum seeking children and the transition into care in Lefevre M & Luckock B (eds) *A Guide for Social Work Practice in Foster, Adoptive and Residential Care*, Basingstoke, Palgrave
Melrose, M. (2006) Young People and Drugs, *Drugs: Policy and Politics*, R. Hughes, R. Lart and P. Higate (eds.) Buckingham, Open University Press
Pearce J. J (2006) Sex, Risk and Resilience in Adolescence, Coleman, J. & Hagell, A. *Risk and Resilience in Adolescence*, John Wiley
Pearce J.J (2006) 'Risk and Resilience: a focus on sexually exploited young people', Thom, B. Sales, R & Pearce, J. *Growing Up with Risk* Policy Press
Pearce J.J. (2006) *Finding the 'I' in Sexual Exploitation: Hearing the Voices of Sexually Exploited Young People in Policy and Practice*, Campbell, R & O'Neil M. Sex Work Now, Willan Press.
Pitts J. (2005) *The Criminal Victimisation of Children and Young People*, Bateman T. & Pitts J. (eds.) *The Russell House Companion to Youth Justice*, Lyme Regis, Russell House Publishing *Work Now*, Willan Press.

Refereed articles:

Pearce J.J. (2007) Joint Editor of a Special edition on The Government's Prostitution Strategy and Community Safety, *The Community Safety Journal*.
Kohli, R (2006) The sound of silence: listening to what unaccompanied children say and do not say. *British Journal of Social Work*, 36:707 - 721
Kohli, R (2006) The comfort of strangers: social work practice with unaccompanied asylum seeking children and young people. *Child & Family Social Work*, 11:1-10
Melrose, M. (2006) Trying to Make a Silk Purse from a Sow's Ear: A comment on the Government's New Prostitution Strategy *Community Safety Journal*, Spring 2006
Pearce, J.J. (2006) Who Needs to be Involved in Safeguarding Sexually Exploited Young People?' *Child Abuse Review*
Pearce, J.J. (2006) (with Lowe, K) Editorial Article: Special edition on young people and sexual exploitation *Child Abuse Review*
Melrose M. (2005) Co-editor (with A. Marlow and D. Barrett) Special Edition *Police, Practice and Research: An International Journal* The Criminal Exploitation of Women and Children
Melrose, M. and Barrett, D. (2005) The Flesh Trade in Europe: Trafficking in Women and Children for the purpose of Sexual Exploitation, *Police, Practice and Research: An International Journal*

Contact Details:

If you require any further information on this project then please contact in the first instance:

Cara Senouni

Research Administrator

University of Bedfordshire

C411 Park Square

Luton

LU1 3JU

Tel: (01582) 743085

Email: cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk

Website: <http://www.beds.ac.uk/research/iasr>