

<b>Institution:</b> University of Bedfordshire
<b>Unit of Assessment:</b> 20 Social Work and Social Policy
<b>1. Unit context and structure, research and impact strategy</b>

### a. Overview

The Institute for Applied Social Research (IASR), one of the largest centres researching social welfare practice in the UK, is committed to providing excellent research to influence policy and practice locally, nationally and internationally. The Institute has 48 staff working on more than 30 research and consultancy projects and 38 PGR student projects underpinned by £10.8m research income over the REF period. It brings together a wide range of disciplines and research topics covering key social work and social policy domains: safeguarding children and adults, including Contextual Safeguarding, child sexual exploitation and other forms of sexual abuse, extra-familial harm, youth justice, adult social care, trafficking, and migration. The Institute is home to three research centres – **The Tilda Goldberg Centre for Social Work and Social Care (TGC)**, **the International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation and trafficking (IC)** and **the Vauxhall Centre for the Study of Crime (VC)**. Since REF2014, we have invested in two interdisciplinary research groups on **forced migration** and **substance misuse and ageing** (Substance Misuse and Ageing Research Team, SMART). There are synergies between the groups, such as between the IC and forced migration, and cross-cutting dimensions, notably gender and ethnicity. An impact case study concerning SMART's work is submitted under UoA3, but its development is reported here.

The IASR is managed by the Director, Professor Emily Munro, assisted by a small group of professors and readers and by an Institute Board, which meets four times a year and is open to all staff. The IASR operates its own ethics panel (accountable to the Board and to the University Research Ethics Committee), chaired by Dr Lisa Bostock (Senior Research Fellow), assisted by a cross section of nine practising researchers. It meets every quarter and considers approximately 25 applications each year. The IASR hosts the regional Making Research Count (MRC) consortium working with 21 subscribing member agencies (in collaboration with Kings College London). MRC normally provides 40 events p.a. but during lockdown this has now increased to 52 online events in six months, with 2400 bookings - double the number compared with the previous six months.

These facts contextualise the energy and enthusiasm that permeate Institute research. The commitment and expertise of the staff generate an ethos of collegiality and a sense of excitement about the importance of using research to inform policy and practice. Staff report pride in belonging to an Institute that improves society through research.

### b. Research and impact strategy

The aim of the Institute is to produce high quality research that reshapes public debate, nationally and internationally, strengthens the evidence base for policy and practice, and brings the voice of people with lived experience centre stage. Our research is concerned not only with analysis, but also with developing and testing interventions; we critique current policy and practice but also forge new concepts and practices; we analyse both macro-level issues but also day-to-day practice in social

welfare. For example, the macro-level critique of child protection systems underpinning Contextual Safeguarding is translated into practice interventions that are now being tested in day-to-day social welfare. As a second example, our NordForsk funded research on relational well-being in the lives of young refugees has forged new narratives of their contribution to their adopted countries (Finland, Norway and Scotland), not just as recipients of care.

Since REF2014, the Institute has strategically broadened its research programmes and increased in size. Our average annual research income has tripled (£524K- £1540K), allowing us to sustain the TGC after the initial investment by the Tilda Goldberg Bequest and to grow our staff group (detailed in Section 2). The TGC programme has been extended to incorporate strengths-based approaches and safeguarding among adults as well as children and young people. The IC has expanded its research on sexual harm to include other forms of abuse and its Contextual Safeguarding programme is radically transforming responses to extra-familial harm. The VC has undertaken major work on Beyond Youth Custody, and a closer working relationship with the IC and with the TGC has helped to identify the intersections where violence and abuse link with crime, and where being in care links with incarceration (e.g. a Nuffield funded study 2018-2019 <https://www.beds.ac.uk/iasr/about/research/vcsc/surviving-incarceration/>).

We have invested in the development of two research groups since 2014. Research groups provide additional leadership to develop a critical mass and a sustained research programme in a given field. SMART's research developed from work in the TGC on substance misuse, which lacked evidence on older people. Its development of people with lived experience as co-researchers was stimulated by modest investment of QR funds in 2014 (£8K). The research group on forced migration provides leadership to strands of work in child welfare across the Institute, with a particular focus on recognising the agency (rather than the victim status) of migrants.

Our research programmes are underpinned by a broad view of social welfare and a wide disciplinary base. We use different disciplines to address the dilemmas of social welfare: balancing partnership with service users while protecting children and young people and adults; respecting practitioner knowledge while critiquing and developing practice; integrating evidence from lived experience with research-based evidence; and forging close links with national policymaking while avoiding partisanship. This work draws on social policy, social work, epidemiology, geography, law, anthropology, arts-based methods, philosophy, sociology and politics – because understanding complex societal issues requires multiple intellectual frameworks. For example, Firmin's work on the spatial distribution of violence against young people using GIS mapping generates data from a novel interdisciplinary perspective (Firmin & Abbott, 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1111/chso.12267>).

Our impact strategies reflect our research showing that impact derives in part from long-term engagement with other researchers and activists (Tilbury et al. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa170>). For example, the IC has a long-term relationship, led by Beckett and Pearce, with Oak Foundation to prevent child sexual abuse. This program (2013-ongoing) has funded three major research projects: Our Voices (2013-16), Our Voices Too (2016-20) and Our Voices Three (2020-23). Through this work the centre has built sustained relationships with agencies to prevent and respond to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and other forms of child sexual abuse (CSA) in the UK and Eastern Europe. The funding supported a youth research and advocacy programme in Albania, Moldova and Serbia and this work reinforces the central

importance of young people's voices in prevention and responses to CSA/E. The Oak Foundation has also supported collaboration between the IC and the Sexual Violence Research Initiative (SVRI) to produce scoping reviews of research on sexual violence against children in partnership with the South African Medical Research Council. In addition, Oak has funded the IC to lead an international network of 42 universities working to prevent sexual violence, using the IC as a model for university leadership.

Munro's role as current Chair of the Executive Committee of INTRAC (the International Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care <https://globalintrac.com>) provides a second example. INTRAC is a community of 187 researchers from 40 countries researching the transition from care to adulthood (care-leaving). The latest developments promote greater dialogue between the Global North and Global South (Van Breda et al. 2020, <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.childyouth.2020.105596>). Munro and others from the Global North (UK, USA and Netherlands) participated in the first Africa Care-Leaving workshop with care-leaving scholars from nine African countries and a second virtual Global Challenges Research Fund event in December 2020 brought together members of the African Network of Care-leaving Researchers and the Community of Researchers in Transition (the PhD/recent post doc arm of INTRAC) to plan publications.

These examples also demonstrate our international perspective, as does the work on migration and trafficking. Since 2013 Kohli has built a research leadership role across Europe with universities and NGOs in Norway, Finland, Denmark, Sweden, Belgium, France, Spain, Italy and Greece. By invitation, Kohli was one of two UK members of the Nordic Network for Research Cooperation on Unaccompanied Refugee Minors (NordURM) in cooperation with the Nordic Network for Research on Refugee Children. Kohli is currently an Advisory Board member of the Coming of Age in Exile (CAGE) research project. This large-scale longitudinal project extends to all Nordic countries coordinated by the University of Copenhagen, Denmark, with research associations in Norway, Sweden and Finland (2015-19). It involves tracing the lives of 100,000 young asylum seekers (see <https://cage.ku.dk/>). Kohli is a research leader for an Erasmus+ research and development project for NGOs in France, Italy, Greece and Germany (<https://www.hamogelo.gr/gr/en/collaborations/etairos-sto-ergo-building-knowledge-from-local-practices-a-solution-for-better-care-and-support-of-unaccompanied-minors-in-europe/>), and a short film at <https://vimeo.com/297302437/a7ad4b0382>).

Between 2017 and 2019, Hynes led a study on human trafficking across Albania, Viet Nam, Nigeria and the UK in partnership with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and funded by the Modern Slavery Innovation Fund (MSIF) (2017-19, £541K). In 2019, Hynes was invited to present on effective prevention at a Consultation on the Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the sale and sexual exploitation of children at UNICEF's Innocenti Research Centre, Florence, Italy.

This international perspective is also demonstrated in Fisher's work on practice research in a global network encompassing over 20 countries, recently focusing on practice research in the Far East (Sim et al., 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1049731518779440>). Similarly, his work as an Australian Research Council Discovery Research Fellow (2017-21) uses comparative international research to illuminate the relationship between engagement and research impact (Tilbury et al. (2020) <https://doi.org/10.1093/bjsw/bcaa170>).

Our philosophy that people with lived experience are experts in their own right and should be equal partners in our research teams underpins our commitment to coproduction. Many of our structures and processes reflect this. Since 2013, the Institute has used QR funds to support a coordinator to promote participatory and service user involvement approaches (Warrington). To date, her work has focused on documenting and disseminating models to support the ethical participation of children and young people in research on abuse and exploitation (Warrington (2020) [https://www.our-voices.org.uk/assets/documents/FINAL-UoB\\_OVToo\\_CreatingSafeSpaces\\_TOOLKIT\\_PAGES.pdf](https://www.our-voices.org.uk/assets/documents/FINAL-UoB_OVToo_CreatingSafeSpaces_TOOLKIT_PAGES.pdf)). The initiative has co-produced research projects including those addressing priorities identified by young people (see *Making Justice Work* <https://www.beds.ac.uk/ic/recently-completed-projects/making-justice-work/>, which was a direct response to issue identified by young people) and has supported a range of researchers nationally and internationally to implement co-production principles in practice. This work also included the development of the Young Researchers' Advisory Panel (YRAP) in 2015 - a globally innovative model for integrating young lived experience at every level of research on safeguarding (see <https://www.beds.ac.uk/ic/current-projects/yrp/>). This work has recently been extended through funding from the Samworth Trust. YRAP employs young people who are developing knowledge in this field and provides advisory support to internal and external research projects and policy development (including consultation to UK Government; International NGOs and leading UK research centres). The project also promotes participatory research and practice methods in adolescent safeguarding within the UK and internationally (see Hamilton et al. (2019) <http://doi.org/10.1108/JCS-07-2019-0037>), and its work has been presented at the prestigious Sexual Violence Research Initiative conference in Brazil (2017). From December 2020, Warrington's role extends to producing a comprehensive policy on safeguarding in social research with both adults and children and young people (complementing general University guidance).

Munro's appointment to lead TGC also boosted our coproduction ethos (see Lushey & Munro, 2016 <https://doi.org/10.1177/1473325014559282>). For example, Munro and Zonouzi undertook co-research with disabled parents to explore their views of statutory assessments by children's services (2018, <https://uobrep.openrepository.com/handle/10547/623168>). The ESRC investment in a £1.6m interdisciplinary study *Exploring Innovations in Transition to Adulthood* involves six care leavers as co-researchers, working in collaboration with the wider team (Warwick University [lead], Newcastle and Coventry Universities, the Care Leavers' Association in the UK and Monash University in Australia (<https://gtr.ukri.org/projects?ref=ES%2FT001348%2F1>)). Wade and Fisher's work incorporating people living with dementia into a systematic review (2015, ISBN 978-1-84905-585-7) again illustrates the Institute's commitment to extending the boundaries of coproduction.

As the UK's only research group specialising in substance use and ageing, SMART initiated in 2016 a special QR-funded project to include people with lived experience as co-researchers. In consequence, SMART has two Public and Expert by Experience Researchers (PEERs) embedded in its research team and three other people with lived experience working in a consultancy capacity. One PEER has led her own externally-funded research study, presented at an international conference in Australia and co-authored a published paper (Wadd & Dutton 2018 <https://doi.org/10.1186/s13011-018-0183-0> - possibly the first ever PEER-led research in this field). This approach was recently recognised by the National Institute of Health Research INVOLVE group as an example of best practice (<https://www.nature.com/articles/d41586-018-06861-9>). Currently, we are working with groups of people with lived experience of prescribed medication dependence to

identify key research questions. The groups identified prescribed medication addiction as having the greatest potential to benefit patients and this was developed into a proposal funded by NIHR in 2020 (£173K).

Bringing the voices of people with lived experience centre stage means embedding their involvement in organisational processes. For example, our ethics review process asks researchers whether they have consulted on the proposal with people with lived experience and to give reasons if not. People with lived experience from both YRAP and SMART participate in the recruitment of research staff and in setting research priorities. This commitment to incorporating the voices of people with lived experience is a significant methodological strength - simply put, we believe that excellence requires that research priorities, processes and outcomes should be influenced by people with lived experience.

The IASR is equally committed to ensure relevance to direct practice. Our professional doctorate programmes are designed for practitioners, and its graduates such as Bateman, Firmin, Harris and Warrington have joined our research teams. Staff such as Evans, Thornhill, Warrington and Wroe have all been recruited from service delivery organisations in order to bring their policy and practice knowledge to bear on Institute research. Our secondment of Bateman to the Office of the Children's Commissioner and Allnock to the National Policing Vulnerability and Knowledge Practice Programme demonstrates another means of connecting with practice.

The commitment to dialogue with practitioners also underpins the Making Research Count (MRC) programme of events which provides a forum for testing the relevance of research findings and for identifying emerging practice issues. In addition, MRC participants often provide access to fieldwork sites and are a key source of recruits to our Professional Doctorates (see 'people'). The drive to maintain up-to-date knowledge of daily practice also underpins the role of staff such as Pearce and Preston-Shoot in chairing Safeguarding Boards.

The increasing intensity and volume of our research is translated into a wide range of publications. (IASR staff have published 343 outputs during the REF period, approximating to one publication per week.) Approximately half our outputs take the form of reports to funders, briefings to policymakers and practitioners, or practice tools, underlining our commitment to policy and practice development. These outputs often have immediate relevance to the field (e.g. Firmin's 2017 work on Contextual Safeguarding and Kohli's 2017 work on Guardianship reported in the Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Annual Report 2019-20). Approximately 40% of our outputs take the form of refereed journal articles. Finally, about 10% of our outputs take the form of book-length publications and edited collections.

In addition to producing a range of written material, Institute staff also produce video-based short films for practice communicating key findings in five-minute videos (<https://www.beds.ac.uk/ic/films/>), and an 'Ethnodrama' on alcohol stigma for the general public, bringing together people with lived experience, researchers and students and staff from the University's School of Media and Performance. (The play was postponed because of COVID-19). We have recently begun to experiment with citizen's juries as a way of generating public engagement in important policy issues, starting with funding (£30K, 2019-20) from the Society for the Study of Addiction to explore whether



people who are alcohol dependent should be included in anti-discrimination legislation such as the Equality Act (2010).

### Future plan for research impact

We will continue to strengthen research impact based on our existing three principles – research excellence, close engagement with policymakers, practitioners and user communities (including at an international level), and targeted communications using a variety of media. Research excellence needs constant renewal, and in 2021 we plan an in-house project to review and systematise key aspects of our research processes, starting with approaches to qualitative data analysis on which much of our research standing depends.

We will increasingly seek to embed our research in teaching. For example, Firmin is leading work to ensure that Contextual Safeguarding perspectives underpin our qualifying programmes in social work and health care. We will move the majority of our publishing to open access platforms in order to make our work more accessible and to raise citation rates (in support of this, the university has a number of agreements with journal publishers that remove open access publication fees.) We also plan to use the increased outreach by MRC as a result of moving work online to target a greater number of practitioners and policymakers among subscribing authorities. The announcement of a series of five seminars on forced migration between November 2020 and April 2021 is a start (<https://www.beds.ac.uk/iasr/mrc/events/>). In a post-COVID world, we have developed a series of online events to recreate the research communities that previously formed at international conferences, including a Care Home Forum focusing on alcohol misuse, and a research forum on care leavers funded through the Global Challenges Research Fund. This work will be informed by a special issue of the *Journal of Children's Services* on service responses to support care and protection of children in context of Covid-19, and a study *Care leavers, Covid-19 and the Transition from Care* (CCTC) funded by the ESRC as part of the UK Research and Innovation's rapid response to Covid-19 (£297K).

### Statement about COVID-19

Like most sizeable research institutes, the IASR has had to respond urgently to COVID-19. This has included advice to DfE on the impact of COVID on child welfare, redesigning staff and student research to take place online, and revising Institute guidelines and ethics processes to take account of COVID-related risks. Two special journal issues (*Journal of Children's Services* and *Murmurations*) focused on COVID-19 and a rapid proposal to the ESRC to study the effects of the pandemic on the health and well-being of young people leaving care was successful (£297K).

## 2. People

### Staffing strategy and staff development

The Institute appoints staff to enhance the disciplinary and methodological expertise in our research teams. During the REF period, the IASR has appointed a new professor of social work research and a new director of the IC, invested in two research groups on substance misuse and forced migration, and developed an Institute-wide approach to distributed leadership. At the university level, the appointment of Grant as Executive Dean for Health and Social Care underlines the role of research in Faculty development.

In 2016, Dr Emily Munro was appointed the Goldberg Professor of Social Work Research, leading the work of the Tilda Goldberg Centre, and in 2017 she succeeded Fisher as Director of the IASR. As Institute Director, Munro has strengthened our financial base and improved the career opportunities for research staff (see section on continuity and renewal). In 2015, Dr Helen Beckett became joint director of the IC with Pearce, and Director in 2016, when she also became a Reader in Child Protection and Children's Rights. She has, with Firmin and others, established closer links with research on youth crime, gang membership and Contextual Safeguarding in the Vauxhall Centre. As noted in Section 1, our staff numbers have increased considerably since REF2014: the FTE of staff returned in REF2021 is 23.8 (representing 30 of the 36 research posts), compared with 14.2FTE in REF2014.

Our approach blends senior academic direction with distributed leadership, recognising that expertise is spread throughout the staff group. A leadership group supports the Institute Director to determine the strategic direction and budgeting. It includes Beckett representing the largest research centre (IC), Kohli leading work on quality assurance of publications and Fisher leading preparations for the REF. This leadership group also sets the tone for a positive and productive research culture, underlined by shared values and commitment. For example, the professorial staff demonstrate the commitment to applied research in their external roles in service agencies (such as chairing safeguarding boards – see section 1) and in generating international research (for example, Kohli's work leading international work on forced migration).

The two larger research centres operate internal leadership teams, which promote collegiate decision-making and prepare staff for greater responsibility. The approach also recognises research showing that significant contribution does not always require formal seniority. For example, an urgent review in March 2020 of the resources to move to online research was led by two early career researchers (ECRs) from TGC (Lynch and Newlands), Warrington leads the Institute work on coproduction in child welfare and safeguarding, and Dutton is leading work on stigma and alcohol use in SMART.

### *Continuity and renewal*

We have taken particular care to ensure continuity and renewal in our staffing. As professorial staff approach retirement, they have shared their roles (such as Pearce and Beckett codirecting the IC) and become intensively involved in mentoring (e.g. Preston-Shoot with staff approaching professorial level). One result is that, despite a lower professorial FTE in REF2021, our income generation has increased as staff such as Beckett, Firmin, and Wadd have been awarded grants with an income value in excess of £5m income over this REF period).

In view of their importance, the posts of Institute Ethics Coordinator (Dr Lisa Bostock) and PGR Coordinator (Dr Isabelle Brodie) were renewed in 2019 as senior roles with a development function (to restructure our ethics review processes to handle greater numbers of applications, and to integrate Institute-based PGR teaching with other university Institutes). We also provide significant support to staff approaching readership or professorial promotion, both through mentoring and internal review of their profile and case for promotion.

In common with most major research centres, the IASR offers an entry route into social research at research assistant level. We view research assistants as ECRs, with the potential to become

research fellows. All research assistants and YRAP interns are supported to take on specific responsibilities, whether as an embedded researcher responsible for relations with a host agency, for specific data collection or analysis, or for contributing to publications. Co-authored publications by Newlands and Walker are examples of ensuring that research assistants are involved in publishing. During the REF period, five research assistants have progressed (through normal recruitment processes) to research fellow posts (Jones, Newlands, Peace, Soares, Walker), while two colleagues progressed from RF to SRF (Cody, Lloyd).

A major change since 2014 is that all Institute staff now participate in the university-wide mentoring process alongside line management in order to pursue broad staff development goals not tied to specific performance objectives.

We intentionally recruit from practice (as noted earlier) in order both to bring practice issues centre stage and to grow the resources for practice-relevant research. Accompanying this policy, we make special provision to ensure that staff joining from practice have appropriate mentoring (in addition to line management) and support to develop their publication profile. We use the VITAE framework to identify the development required and then make provision from internal resources or provide access to external courses supported by QR funding. Early and mid-career researchers (EMCRs) are supported to bid for research funding and to develop their writing plans. Twice a year, a week-long writing workshop encourages staff to develop their writing skills: feedback is that these workshops are helpful in creating realistic goals and unblocking writing. The IASR has established 'lunch and learn' sessions to improve access to current research studies, joint bidding between experienced and less experienced staff to demystify research funding, an expert speaker series to ensure the visibility of leading-edge research and an Institute research training programme.

The IASR also supports staff undertaking PhDs by providing resources (including fees, flexibility in contracted hours, funds for fieldwork and access to supervision). Three staff have completed during the REF period (Alexander, 2019, Cody 2020, Cornish, 2018), Thomas is due to complete shortly, and Lynch has started her PhD. In 2018, the IASR initiated support for PhD by Published Work in order to recognise the value of substantial research experience as part of PhD-level study. Support includes publication planning to create the body of work required for a PhD. So far, Peace and Walker have started this PhD route.

A key feature of our strategy for continuity and renewal is the use of QR funding. Since 2013, this has supported Warrington's work on coproduction and a development grant in 2016 kick-started SMART's development of peer researchers. Annually since 2013-14, the IASR uses a proportion of QR funds (£15-25K) to hold a competition for up to £5K personal research development budgets, to secure teaching or administration buyout, research assistance (e.g. transcription) or to fund small scale research. Since the scheme was initiated, 18 staff have benefited from these internal awards, strengthening research development (e.g. Connolly's work on asylum seeking children) and outputs (e.g. Allnock's publications on child abuse). Particular care is taken to ensure that the scheme recognises that staff on fixed-term research contracts often have little externally funded time to create outputs, and that staff primarily engaged in teaching need practical assistance to realise their research goals.



*Selecting staff for REF2021*

Staff seminars to explain the REF were held annually from 2016. The selection of staff was based on two exercises in 2018 and 2019 identifying those with significant responsibility for research and the quality of their outputs, guided by the university's Code of Practice. The principles of clear communication and accountability underpinned line managers' dialogue with staff to establish their level of independence and to record the outcomes. Seminars on the Code of Practice included emphasis on the right of appeal: while there were many discussions with staff about the relationship between their field of research and the main research themes within the Institute (some of which led to staff being referred for possible inclusion in other UOAs), in the event no-one took advantage of the right of appeal. Assessment of output quality based on REF criteria was undertaken by an internal Publications Committee, led by Kohli, using an anonymous, paired-reviewer process and giving detailed written feedback. For EMCRs, mentoring also provides a forum for digesting this feedback.

**Research students****Table 1: Doctoral completions**

Year	13-14	14-15	15-16	16-17	17-18	18-19	19-20	Total
'Traditional'	0	1.75	1	2	2	2	0	8.75
Professional Doctorate	10	8	5	0	4	4	4.33	35.33
Total	10	9.75	6	2	6	6	4.33	44.08

The number of doctoral completions has risen from 21 reported in 2014 to 44.08 in the period to 2020. The prominence of the professional doctorates reflects our commitment to improving direct practice, including by developing researcher-practitioners. Between 2014 and 2020, 8.75 completions were recorded by students based in IASR undertaking a 'traditional' PhD and a further 35.33 completions concerned the Professional Doctorate in Systemic Practice (PDSP) or in Children and Young People's Services (PDCYPS). (Fractions arise from supervision teams shared with other disciplines.) Both professional doctorates were successfully revalidated in 2015 and again in 2020. The two programmes have slightly different student profiles, in that a significant proportion of the PDSP students (12 of 31 in January 2020) are based outside the UK, while the PDCYPS tends to attract a UK-based cohort. More PDSP students also receive employer support in funding their programme of study.

Student feedback is regularly collected through surveys and is very positive: *'being supported to explore a topic of interest and importance to me; space and time to read and think and learn'* is a typical comment. The survey responses also indicate that the research expertise in IASR is important in both attracting students and in terms of the quality of supervision. Most students are returning to study after a significant gap, and report that the support received from staff and peers is of high quality. Other positive aspects include the input from external experts in the first year of group learning, as well as the opportunity to undertake research in an area which relates to their professional expertise and has the potential to generate change. Students also have access to research opportunities – for example, for systemic practice research students, an annual Bedfordshire Systemic Practice and Research School and a biannual Systemic Postgraduate Research conference (in partnership with the Tavistock and Portman NHS Trust). Students have ongoing access to online research training and development via the university's Research Graduate

School. While there is an absence of systematic outcomes data, programme information indicates that the professional doctorates provide a platform for students to progress onto higher levels or new forms of employment. For example, during this REF period, five graduates who were not previously employed in academia now hold academic positions, and a further six who were already in academia have obtained more senior positions.

Strategically, IASR has extended and developed supervision expertise, specifically by adding ECR staff to experienced supervisory teams. This has helped grow the pool of available supervisors. Supervisory refresher training is undertaken at least every two years, and staff receive additional support via lunchtime discussion sessions. Staff are also required to undertake training on examining and viva chairing.

The programmes welcome students living with disabilities. There are no identified barriers to disabled students accessing the curriculum for the professional doctorates and programme content and design is monitored to ensure compliance with the Equality Act 2010. Students with a disability are encouraged to discuss their needs with the programme team who will, in conjunction with the university's disability advice team, ensure that the relevant support systems are in place in advance of study commencing.

### **Equality and diversity (E&D)**

The context for the Institute's approach to equality and diversity is set by University policy, with clear objectives and strategies to achieve them. University E&D policy is underpinned by a rights perspective, emphasising the need to ensure that all staff

- are treated with respect and dignity;
- are treated fairly with regard to all procedures, assessments and choices;
- receive encouragement to reach their full potential (p.4).

In terms of general Institute practices, these principles are reflected in the management and mentoring arrangements for staff, support for staff seeking promotion, and in recruitment practices for staff and PGR students (including appropriate gender and ethnicity representation on appointment panels). Reasonable adjustments (such as home working) have been made extensively to recognise the caring responsibilities of three staff with young children, one staff member with caring responsibilities, one disabled staff member and one disabled PGR student. In the IASR, women and people from minority ethnic groups are highly visible in leadership roles, signalling (in these respects at least) a diverse staff group with opportunities for career advancement.

The general principles of E&D are embodied in the university's Code of Practice, which emphasises the need for clarity of communication regarding selection and the role of faculty-based equality impact assessments (EIA) to inform policy. In terms of the REF specifically, these principles underpinned refresher training (in 2019) for REF subject leads and senior managers, communicating the nature and purpose of the REF throughout 2016-2020 to all staff (whether or not self-identifying as researchers) in a range of school and faculty meetings, detailed sessions on the Code of Practice (in 2019 and 2020), and a faculty-wide EIA in late 2020, led by Munro.

The EIA found that three quarters of staff eligible for inclusion in UoA 20 were female (76% female, 24% male). Eighty percent of staff identified as having significant responsibility for research were female (20% male). Sixty one percent of staff in UoA 20 self-identified as White and 38% as from BME groups; a lower proportion of BME staff was identified as having significant responsibility for research (80% White; 20% BME). Nine percent of staff in UoA20 were known to have a disability. Again, a lower proportion (3%) was identified as having significant responsibility for research (but the numbers involved are small). The EIA suggests that REF selection was broadly representative of all eligible staff, although further work will focus on the research careers of BME groups, staff with disabilities and staff with caring responsibilities. Following up the equality-related circumstances reported under the Code of Practice, we found that all the declared circumstances were already recognised in research management.

Special mention should be made of the work of the SMART team to ensure that staff with lived experience are not disadvantaged by standard University employment processes, and that declared information is restricted to those who need to know. The SMART team successfully negotiated changes to internal processes in order to ensure that job applicants with a criminal record are not disadvantaged and that reasonable adjustments are made to recognise their circumstances.

Of course, these formal arrangements for pursuing equality and diversity say little about the wider role of the Institute to challenge discrimination. We believe that it is important to ensure consistency between internal processes underpinning equality and diversity and our research goals to combat discrimination in wider society. Our work to involve people with lived experience signals a general commitment to social justice that is reflected in our approach to E&D within the Institute. In line with this, the Black Lives Matter movement emerging in 2020 stimulated a review, led by the IC, of our research portfolio, with a view to developing action plans covering our research programmes, the wider university environment and relationships with external partners. We are also constantly reminded of the need to keep E&D under review by our PhD students, whose motivation is often strongly oriented to challenging discrimination. And, in line with one of the central lessons of anti-discriminatory practice, we keep in mind that equality and diversity is never finally achieved, but rather should be constantly renewed.

**3. Income, infrastructure and facilities****Funding**

The Institute has had significant success in securing funding, with the result that our average annual research income has tripled from £524K in REF2014 to £1,540K. Table 2 shows the annual totals and Table 3 shows the sources.

**Table 2: Research income (x£1000)**

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	Totals
913.9	911.8	1,804.9	2,026.7	1,608.6	1,730.4	1,781.8	10,778.1
						Average annual	1,539.7

**Table 3: Sources of research income**

Source	%
Central/Local government	46.9
UK Charities	40.3
UK Research Councils	1.4
EU Government	1.7
Other EU sources	0.5
Other sources	9.2

Some examples will illustrate our ability to combine different funding sources and to maintain long term relationships with funders.

The Esmeé Fairbairn Foundation funded the Contextual Safeguarding research through three grants during 2013-22, including the *MSUnderstood* project (£167K, 2013-16) and two projects *Beyond Referrals* (2016-22), which are developing self-assessment resources for schools and multi-agency partnerships to address harmful sexual behaviours. These two projects received £333K funding, and matched funding from other sources added £89K. Similarly, Oak Foundation funding for the IC's work on participation (*Our Voices*) has taken the form of three grants totalling £1.16m between 2013 and 2023.

Our work on forced migration demonstrates the same principle. Two Home Office grants totalling £199K between 2014 and 2019 funded research on the Independent Child Trafficking Advocates schemes. This was followed by a Home Office study of trafficking 2017-19 (led by Hynes, £541K) and a NordForsk-funded study of relational well-being and migration 2020-24 (led by Kohli, £1.16m). A British Academy post-doctoral fellowship award of £210K to Aisha Hutchinson funded work on early marriage in the Middle East and North Africa region (2013-2020).

Our income profile also shows that income is distributed over a wide variety of grants. TGC work on the DfE Innovation programme comprised five projects between 2018 and 2020 with funding of over £550K. Similarly, our work on CSA/E receives funding from over a dozen different charities, reflecting relationships with a portfolio of funders in a field where there is no single, large funding source. Long-

term relationships, such as with Oak Foundation, provide repeated funding that underpins the cumulative, sophisticated knowledge building required to achieve excellent research.

In 2019-20, our engagement in research council studies has increased with key awards including

- The ESRC/UKRI study of *COVID-19 and Transitions from Care* £297K (**Munro**);
- *Exploring Innovations in Transitions Out of Care* (PI: Currie, University of Warwick, **Munro** is co-investigator, £1.6m);
- *Caring for Children on the Move* (PI: Crafter, Open University, **Kohli** is co-investigator); and
- *Improving Social Care Systems and Practices for Safeguarding Young People at Complex Risk* (PI: Lefevre, University of Sussex, **Firmin** is co-investigator £1.9m).

Since 2014, our preparation of research bids and the generation of external grant income has become more efficient. In part this is due to the Innovation and Enterprise Service (IES), which regularly sends targeted details about funding opportunities. Research support provided by the IES includes identifying suitable funding opportunities and informing staff about them, helping with bid writing, including searching/contacting potential partners and the preparation of budgets, grant submission and supporting the post-award process.

QR income amounting to £1.2m over the REF period has provided a significant source for development work, including for Institute administrative support, for coproduction, for pump-priming projects and for supporting publications for staff who often have little dedicated writing time. Having access to a small funding source without significant administrative overhead has sometimes proved critical in advancing research (for example, where the costs of transcription delay analysis).

In addition to the services provided by the IES, the university provides the usual facilities for scholarly work, including a dedicated librarian/information scientist (who advises, for example, on searches underpinning systematic reviews). These resources are equally available to PGR students, who also have access to dedicated office space. In a post-COVID work, the University has proved adept at providing access to and support to use communication resources (e.g. teaching students how to use communication software to record interviews – with respondent permission), and in providing access to e-resources to replace the books that it is no longer convenient to retrieve from the library. The provision of e-resources has been particularly relevant as staff and PGR research had to be reprogrammed to take account of online methods. The library normally provides 24/7 access and lending rights: this was maintained for the parts of the lockdown where it was permitted.

In 2014, the new Postgraduate and CPD Centre (£17m) opened in the Luton Campus with 4,254m<sup>2</sup> of space over five storeys, state-of-the-art IT and AV equipment, lecture theatres, quiet study areas, and a student lounge. About two thirds of the space is dedicated to teaching and research and the rest to social and support areas for PGRs. In October 2016, a new library (£30m) opened on the Luton Campus (see REF5a). The value of this development to UOA20 is the support given to PGR students to develop study skills and the availability of library resources 24/7 to students who may be employed for a substantial part of their working day

Journal access is comparable to peer institutions and is subject to regular consultation in order to replace legacy journals as our research evolves and requires new journal access. Since 2013, the university has provided full access to ScienceDirect enabling staff and students access to all of the



key texts in health-related research. Access to NHS information services through Open Athens is especially valuable for interdisciplinary research where health care publishing is relevant. The Library has also recently joined open access publishing arrangements with key publishers (Wiley and Springer to date), which enables academics and researchers to publish in the participating journals at no cost to the author as the article processing charge is paid for as part of the journal subscription funded by the university. This includes some fully Gold Open Access journals.

While it is fully self-funding, Making Research Count provides a significant resource for collaborating with the practice community about research, both to communicate results but - as importantly – to gather intelligence about emerging practice issues. A new £50K Faculty investment in simulation environments for professional training (custody suites, interview rooms) will assist research-informed teaching in a realistic setting. Lastly, the Institute operates its own Ethics Panel, accountable to the Board and to the University Research Ethics Committee (UREC), providing rapid review from peers, informed by shared experience of the complex issues in research in social work and social policy. This results in quicker, more expert responses, therefore reducing the need to refer applications to UREC.

#### 4. Collaboration and contribution to the research base, economy and society

##### Wider influence or contributions to the discipline (selected)

**Allnock** was consultant to research in practice's resource on responding to intrafamilial sexual abuse (2019) and is seconded to advise Norfolk's Chief Constable as the National Police Chiefs' Council Lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation and NPCC Lead for Violence and Public Protection.

**Firmin** achieved the Editor's Choice List in the Journal of Families, Relationships and Societies, 2019 and received the Top Citation Award in Child Abuse Review, 2019. She also received a Winston Churchill Fellowship, 2014-15.

**Fisher** was co-chair of JUC-SWEC Research Committee until 2015, a member of the National Institute for Health Research School for Social Care Research Advisory Board (to October 2014), and was appointed Discovery Research Fellow, Griffith University, Australia, funded by the Australian Research Council (2017-2020). Fisher is also a member of the steering group for the series of International Practice Research Conferences (New York 2014, Hong Kong 2017, Melbourne 2021).

Following her award of an OBE in 2013 and the Queen's Anniversary Prize in 2013, **Pearce** received in 2015 a lifetime achievement award from the National Working Group for work on safeguarding vulnerable children, and the Vice-Chancellors' Student Experience Award in 2015 for research impact of the year.

**Simon** is a member of the Research Advisory Group, Association for Systemic and Family Therapy, and member of the Scientific Committee, European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry, University of Leuven, 2017 and 2018.

**Wadd** leads the Drink Wise, Age Well academic partners which comprise researchers from Queen's University Belfast, Glasgow Caledonian and Glyndwr University in Wales.

Several staff have served as visiting professors (**Pearce** at Goldsmiths [ongoing], **Fisher** at LSE [2012-2015], **Preston-Shoot** at Gothenburg [ongoing]). Fisher and Preston-Shoot are members of the Academy of Social Sciences.

IASR staff are frequently invited to provide plenary presentations at national and international conferences. Selected examples include:

**Allnock** was the keynote speaker on disclosure of CSA for Named and Designated Professional conference March 2019 in Birmingham, on disclosure of CSA for the Wiltshire Local Children Safeguarding Board's launch of new sexual abuse strategy, November 2018, and for NSPCC 'Pants' campaign in Bournemouth and Dorset, May 2018.

**Bateman** gave the plenary at the 2018 Youth Justice Annual Convention.

**Beckett** gave the keynote speech at the 2018 National Social Care Council Wales annual conference and the 2018 College of Policing's Senior Leader Vulnerability event involving chief constables.

**Firmin** was invited speaker, ANZATSA bi-annual conference New Zealand, 2017; invited keynote address, Sexual Violence Research and Prevention Unit, University of the Sunshine Coast Australia, 2019; invited keynote address, East Asia Regional Conference for International Schools, 2019; invited keynote, University of Northampton 2015 conference Violence: Children, Family, Society.

**Fisher:** Closing plenaries, Third Practice Research conference, New York, May 2014, and Fourth Practice Research conference, Hong Kong, May 2017;

**Kohli:** Resettlement of unaccompanied asylum-seeking young people in foster care: a UK perspective. NIDOS, Amsterdam, 2015; Research Horizons in 9<sup>th</sup> European Forum on the rights of the child: coordination and cooperation in integrated child protection systems, Brussels, 2015; Liquid children: reflections on the movements forced migrant children make towards their 'best interests' 2015; Social Work with unaccompanied asylum seeking children: messages from research, Norway, 2016; Working with unaccompanied minors: some thoughts from the field. Bergen, 2017.

**Munro:** (2017) How do different judicial and welfare systems influence leaving care practice, Ettervernkonferansen, 2017 (The Leaving Care conference); Oslo and Akershus University, Norway, Child welfare: challenges and service responses to meet the needs of adolescents in out of home care in England, September, 2015; Fifth Centre for Excellence in Child and Family Welfare Annual Sector Research Symposium, University of Melbourne, Australia, July 2015; Care-leaving in the time of Covid-19. Global INTRAC (online), September 2020; Integrated Care and Support for Care Leavers, European Social Network Working Group, Scottish Government, Edinburgh, September 2019; Working with adolescents on the edge of care, Anglicare, Melbourne, August 2019; Evaluating Staying Put in the UK, Home Stretch Symposium, Sydney, August 2019; Upholding the rights to young people leaving out of home care, Care Leavers and Wellbeing: Coram Voice Bright Spots Peer Learning Event, London, April 2019.

**Pearce** was keynote speaker at the Oxfordshire Teaching Schools Alliance Annual Counselling in schools conference, Oxford, 2018; the London Metropolitan Police Service and Barnardo's 'Preventing child sexual exploitation: would an international age of consent to sexual activity help secure the welfare of children?', 2017; the launch of 'The Routledge Handbook of Global Child Welfare': House of Lords, Westminster, London and she facilitated young people to speak at Children's Mental Health and Child Friendly Justice, UK Parliament in co-operation with The Parliamentary Assembly of the Council of Europe, Portcullis House, Westminster, London, 2017; plenary speaker at the 2017 Children and Young People Now conference: Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation, London, presenting on 'What research tells us about child sexual exploitation'.

**Simon** was keynote invited speaker at the 2018 Intimacy as a form of Collaborative Inquiry. PPIS Family Therapy Institute Conference, Singapore; keynote speaker at the second Postgraduate Research Conference, UoB & Tavistock Clinic, 2018; keynote speaker at the Göteborgs Centrum för Kompetensutveckling Family Therapy Institute, Gothenburg, Sweden, 2018; the Symposium on

Systemic PhDs. Systemic Practice and Research conference, University of Heidelberg, 2017; the Singapore Family Therapy Association annual conference, 2016; the Association for Family and Systemic Therapy annual conference. Brighton, 2016; and the National Autistic Society. Autism and Communications Conference, 2015. Simon also convened major celebrations of systemic practice in the form of a Festschrift for Dr Imelda McCarthy (2018), John Shotter (2016) and Dr Peter Lang (2015).

**Wadd**: gave keynote presentations at Substance Misuse in Older Adults conference, Brussels, 2014; Ageism in Substance Use, House of Lords, London (2017); Substance Misuse in Older Adults conference, Wales, 2017; Substance Misuse in the Elderly, London, 2014; Drugscope Drug and Alcohol Use in Older People, London, 2014.

### Participation in peer-review process and editorships

IASR staff make significant contributions to peer-review and journal editing.

**Bateman** joint-edits Safer Communities (2011-) and is news editor of Youth Justice.

**Firmin** was associate editor, Journal of Children's Services 2017–19 and is now associate editor, Child Abuse Review 2019 – present.

**Kohli** was associate editor of Child and Family Social Work (2005-15) and is editorial board member of Nordic Social Work Research.

**Munro** (with associate editors Allnock and Beckett) edits the Journal of Children's Services 2017-present.

**Pearce** was associate editor and editorial board member for Child Abuse Review (2012-16), and reviewer for abstracts submitted to the Sexual Violence Research Forum 2019, South Africa Medical Council.

**Preston-Shoot** was the founding editor of Ethics and Social Welfare (to 2015).

**Simon** is the founding editor of Murmurations: Journal of Transformative Systemic Practice.

Staff also contribute to the development of national and international research.

**Fisher** was external assessor to the Academy of Finland social work research programme (2016), the Swedish Research Council – FORTE (Indo-Swedish Research on Ageing, June 2017; chair of the assessment panel for FORTE's Applied Welfare Research programme (2018-2021) and has been appointed external advisor to its social welfare research programme (2019-2022).

**Kohli** was output assessor for REF 2014 (Social Policy and Social Work), has been a reviewer for Riksbankens Jubileumsfond (Sweden's leading grant-making foundation in the humanities and social sciences) since 2013, was a member of the commissioning panel for the AHRC-ESRC Forced Displacement call, September 2016, is advisory board member of the Coming of Age in Exile (CAGE <https://cage.ku.dk/>) research project, 2015-19, and is Advisory Board member for the TRUST project in Finland, focussing on the long-term resettlement of unaccompanied children into Finnish society (<http://www.transculturaltrust.net/>), 2016-18.

**Munro** is co-founder and current Chair of the Executive Committee for Global INTRAC (the International Research Network on Transitions to Adulthood from Care) promoting national and international research on the transition from care to adulthood, is an ongoing member of several Advisory Groups (Coram/BAAF, Rees Centre for Research in Fostering and Education, Oxford University [2016], Transition from Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services: users and leavers co-produce a Transition Preparation Programme [Cambridge University, NIHR funded, 2015–16], Doncaster Children's Trust Expert Advisory Panel [Department for Education, 2014-17], and was invited to provide masterclasses for the South Australian Government (on leaving care and

residential care).

**Pearce** was invited reviewer for paper and abstract submissions for the 2019 Sexual Violence Research Forum, University of South Africa, 2018-2019.

### **Collaboration with external bodies and responsiveness to national & international priorities and initiatives**

IASR staff often initiate or are key players in national and international policy debates. Examples include:

**Firmin and Pitt's** work on Contextual Safeguarding and county lines responds to widespread concern about young people and drug misuse and is being integrated into Ofsted inspection frameworks; the inclusion of Contextual Safeguarding into statutory guidance on child protection is reported in the case study on safeguarding young people.

**Kohli** has been influential in developing parliamentary debates on forced migration, giving evidence on the evaluation of ICTAs to the APPG on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery (2016), acting as expert witness to the enquiry into unaccompanied minors in the European Union, and acting as expert adviser in relation to child trafficking within the Parliamentary Review of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 (reporting to both Houses of Parliament). The influence of Kohli's research is also signalled by his invitation to participate in the European Commission's Horizon 2020 High-Level Policy Expert Meeting Asylum hearings for unaccompanied minors: What are the challenges? (22 October 2020).

**Munro** was an invited speaker at the *Home Stretch Symposium* and associated meetings in Australia to inform policy development, programme implementation and evaluation to extend care to 21.

**Pearce** was appointed (2014) as professorial advisor on Child Sexual Exploitation by the UNESCO Child and Family Research Centre, NUI Galway, Ireland; was chair of the Academic Advisory Board for the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (2015-17) and was a panel member of the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse within the family environment (2014-17).

IASR staff also participate in **professional activities** that contribute to safeguarding children and adults and that bring scholarly insight to bear on social policy. For example:

**Bateman** is an associate of the Centre for Youth and Criminal Justice, University of Strathclyde (2018-present); deputy chair of the National Association for Youth Justice (2010-present); independent chair of the Advisory Group on Centre for Justice Innovation's Problem Solving Youth Court project (2017-present); a panel member of Lord Laming's review on care and crime (2015-2016); and is a member of HM Inspectorate of Probation Steering Group on inspections for Youth Offending Teams (2017).

**Beckett** was vice-chair, BASPCAN (now AoCCP) Northern Ireland branch (2015–19); an invited member of Crown Prosecution Service Child Sexual Abuse Stakeholder Forum; of the Office of Children's Commissioner England's Research Advisory Board; and of the National Institute Health Research's Research Design Service East of England Management Board; she also gave expert evidence to the Home Affairs Select Committee on policing responses to sexual abuse (2018) and IICSA's inquiry into child sexual exploitation by groups, and was a member of the Home Office Expert Reference Group for work on group-based CSE.

**Firmin** is a board member, National Organisation of the Treatment of Offenders, 2017- present.

**Pearce** is LSCB chair of Hammersmith and Fulham; Westminster, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea); Pearce was also the academic contributor to Child Sexual Exploitation Case Reviews for

**Unit-level environment template (REF5b)**

the Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland 2014-16; undertook a Serious Case Review, Bradford 2015-16; and was QA assessor for CSE case, Staffordshire, 2017.

**Preston-Shoot** is chair of Brent and of Lewisham Safeguarding Adults Boards, and Chair of London Regional Network of Independent Chairs of Safeguarding Adults Boards.

**Wadd** is academic advisor to the parliamentary policy group on older adults and substance misuse (2015-); an expert member of Expert member of the Welsh Assembly's Advisory Panel on Substance Misuse in Older People (2014); gave evidence to the Government's Advisory Council on the Misuse of Drugs (2014); and is an invited member of the European Substance Misuse and Addictive Behaviour Group (2015-).