REF2021

Institution: University of Greenwich

Unit of Assessment: 3 - Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy

Title of case study: Impact of research on safeguarding, inequalities, school transition, and bullying on policies and practice of local and national governments, charities and NGO's in the UK, Ireland and Australia to improve long term health and education outcomes for vulnerable children

Period when the underpinning research was undertaken: January 2000 – March 2017

Details of staff conducting the underpinning research from the submitting unit:

Name(s):	Role(s) (e.g. job title):	Period(s) employed by submitting HEI:
Prof. Pam Maras	Professor	01/09/1994 – present
Prof. Carl Parsons	Professor	23/07/2007 – 31/07/2016
Dr. Gail Gilchrist	Head of Centre for Applied Social Research	01/04/2011 – 31/08/2013
Prof. Claire Monks	Professor and Lead for Centre for Vulnerable Children and Families	01/05/2007 – present
Dr. Trevor Thompson	Associate Professor	18/08/2008 – present

Period when the claimed impact occurred: August 2013 – February 2020

Is this case study continued from a case study submitted in 2014? N

1. Summary of the impact

Children's long-term outcomes, wellbeing and individual development can be seriously affected by vulnerabilities such as special educational needs (SEN), social disadvantage, discrimination, and bullying. To determine how children at risk can be optimally supported, the University of Greenwich studied the effectiveness of multi-agency communication and cooperation in child safeguarding; the effect of inequalities on access to education; the progress and transition of students with special educational needs (SEN); and the developmental origins and consequences of bullying. This work has impacted policies and practice of national and international governments, charities and NGO's. Impacts include contributing to **NICE guidelines** and other commissioned reports for the **UK Department for Education** (Bennet and Timpson); local government policy and guidance (**Northamptonshire, Hampshire, & Waltham Forest Councils)**; and to influential international reports by **UNICEF,** the **Australian NGO CREATE**, and the **Irish National Council for Special Education.**

2. Underpinning research

As emphasized by the Marmott review, every child deserves the best possible start in life and the opportunity to maximise their capabilities. However, there are many risk factors that can have long-lasting negative effects on children's development. The **Centre for Vulnerable Children and Families**, led by **Monks** at the **Institute for Lifecourse Development** at the University of Greenwich, was created to support and further develop our long-standing expertise in research and practice on the wellbeing and life outcomes of vulnerable children and their families across a broad range of contexts. The research and impact outlined below - on child safeguarding, children with special educational needs, children affected by inequalities, and bullying comes from this tradition and is based on the work of **Maras**, **Parsons, Thompson**, and **Monks** who are longstanding staff at Greenwich along with **Gilchrist** a more recent member of staff who moved to take up a Chair at Kings College in 2013.

Research on multi-agency communication and cooperation in child safeguarding

Outcomes for vulnerable children hinge on adequate support during critical times. Failures of responsible agencies - local authority, police, health services and education - to work together effectively to safeguard children and young people have serious consequences; including a number of tragic deaths that were nationally reported and led to a series of governmental interventions. A team of Greenwich researchers and practitioners led by **Gilchrist** were commissioned by London councils to assess the early impact of inter-agency communication and cooperation via **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs** (MASH) leading to a key research report **[3.1]**. MASH are multi-agency teams of individuals employed by individual agencies but co-located in one office, serving as central points for all safeguarding and child welfare notifications. The team performed longitudinal mixed methods research, including site visits, case study snapshot audit of referrals and qualitative interviews with referring professionals, in 2013 in London boroughs before and after implementation of MASH. The research identified that in order to increase the sense of inclusion of all professionals in MASH, more feedback was needed about the outcomes of referrals and more training was needed about MASH for professionals who make safeguarding referrals. The report made concrete suggestions for improvements, including introducing team building activities to increase the integration of all professionals into the team and reduce feelings of marginalisation, raising awareness of the role of MASH by involving external strategic managers in training events and engaging professional groups in triage and decision-making processes within MASH.

Research on inequalities, vulnerability and low attainment
Addressing vulnerability to low achievement and negative experiences in education is similarly dependent on appropriate contextual support. **Parsons** and **Thompson** have studied the impact of multiple inequalities in children's education attainment and outcomes related to gender and ethnicity. Key studies referenced here **[3.2, 3.3]** have analysed large-scale longitudinal attainment data to demonstrate associations between low attainment and low income, gender, and specific minority ethnic groups. These studies have included critical theoretical work showing fundamental explanatory failures in influential theories claiming to help understand inequality and have informed policy and thinking around appropriate actions to deal with behaviour and understand exclusion.

Research on behaviour and transition problems for children with special educational needs (SEN)
A particularly important vulnerable period in childhood is the transition between schools, which can cause stress, anxiety and lower self-esteem. Key research by **Maras** including qualitative research cited here **[3.4]** has highlighted that these problems are often exacerbated for students with special educational needs (SEN). Prospective research before and after school transition, has shown what promotes successful transitions for students with SEN. The research found that costly additional support services are not necessarily beneficial, as opposed to factors with a positive influence such as continuity of support, dedicated spaces, and effective communication between support services, the young person, and their parents to tailor support to students' needs. These findings have key implications for education policy and practice.

Research on the origins and impact of aggression and bullying
Finally, bullying is an issue that confers serious risks to many children. Peer aggression and bullying behaviour also increases at periods of educational transition. **Monks**' **[3.5]** research, via surveys and via critical analysis of the literature focuses on the developmental origins of aggressive, bullying and cyberbullying behaviour among young children, particularly at point of early transitions. **Monks**' extensive research with collaborators in Europe, Asia and South America has led to cross-cultural research studies. **Monks**' work has highlighted risk factors for bullying and the negative impact school violence can have, e.g., on children's self-esteem.

3. References to the research

1. Crockett R, **Gilchrist G**, Davies J, Henshall A, Hoggart L, Chandler V, Sims D, Webb J (2013). Assessing the early impact of multi agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) in London.

London: London Councils, MASH and University of Greenwich.
http://www.londonscb.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/04/mash_report_final.pdf

2. **Parsons C** (2016). Ethnicity, gender, deprivation and low educational attainment in England – political arithmetic, ideological stances and the deficient society. *Education, Citizenship and Social Justice, 11*, 160-83. https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1746197916648282

3. **Parsons C** and **Thompson T** (2017). Ethnicity, disadvantage and other variables in the analysis of Birmingham longitudinal school attainment datasets. *Educational Review, 69*(5), 577-599. https://doi.org/10.1080/00131911.2017.1281227. [Although published after staff contract end, Parsons' research work on this was carried out entirely whilst at the university]

4. **Maras P** & Aveling EL (2006). Students with Special Educational Needs: transitions from primary to secondary school. *British Journal of Special Education*, *33,* 196-203. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-8578.2006.00439.x

5. **Monks CP**, Smith PK, Naylor P, Barter C, Ireland JL & Coyne I (2009). Bullying in different contexts: Commonalities, differences and the role of theory. *Aggression and Violent Behavior, 14*(2): 146–156. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.avb.2009.01.004

Indicators of research quality:
- The research has been published in respected, international peer-reviewed academic journals (3.2 – 3.5).

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4. Details of the impact

Each strand of research outlined above has led to direct impacts on public policy and services for vulnerable children as evidenced in many policy guidelines and reports, in the UK and globally. These authoritative reports and guidelines inform large cohorts of professional education and healthcare practitioners and help address the causes of long-term inequalities in outcomes for children.

Impacting national healthcare (NICE) guidelines on effective approaches to child safeguarding
Research by the Greenwich team including **Gilchrist** (see **[3.1]**) demonstrated the importance of the role of Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs in child safeguarding and the reports' recommendations on related changes in practitioners' work culture were then directly incorporated in the 2017 UK Government, **Department of Health and Social Care, National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) guidelines** "Child abuse and neglect: recognising, assessing and responding to abuse and neglect of children and young people" **[5.1]**. This report was the sole reference used on this topic. These NICE guidelines were produced and evidence selected at the request of the **Department for Education**, by a committee of practitioners, academics and experts by experience, advised by an expert reference group of children and young people.

Informing UK national and local government education policy and guidance on behaviour and exclusion in schools
Although it was the previous REF period when the research by **Maras** and **Parsons** on school transitions and special needs **[3.4]** and inequalities **[3.2, 3.3]** was included in a House of Commons Education Select Committee report on "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools", this formed a pathway for the underpinning research to have impact during the current REF period. This impact concerns local authority and national policy and practice on how to deal with behaviour in schools and deal effectively with school exclusions. The "Behaviour and Discipline in Schools" report was cited in the "Promoting good behaviour in schools" policy and practice guidance (2015) of **Northamptonshire County Council [5.2]** and in the **UK Government Department for Education** commissioned **Bennett review [5.3]**, "Independent review of behaviour in schools" (2017), on how school leaders can optimize outcome for students. The Bennett review was subsequently cited in the **UK Government's** independently commissioned **Timpson review [5.4]** on school exclusion (2019). Building on the expertise on behaviour and discipline in schools, this review made 30 recommendations on exclusions and new school accountability. Other earlier work by **Maras** and **Parsons**, assessing the role of factors underpinning success, also impacted

on briefings on pupil mentoring for the **Hampshire County Council** Inspection and Advisory Service **[5.5]**.

Parsons' research **[3.2, 3.3]** was also used in a report commissioned by the **Department for Education** (2018) **[5.6]** on how schools nationally could better support children requiring alternative provision. **Parsons'** work was exclusively cited on the underrepresentation of Roma, Irish Travellers and black British students in referrals to alternative provision and thus risks of missing out on vital services. This report was subsequently referenced in, first, a review of alternative provision by the **London Borough of Waltham Forest [5.7]**, which used findings that schools with a rigid approach to behaviour management tended to have fewer alternative provisions for pupils from vulnerable groups; and, second, in the "Off-rolling in English schools" Commons Library Briefing (2020**) [5.8]**, which raised awareness that schools may be financially incentivised to permanently exclude pupils over referrals to alternative provision, showing **Parsons'** research continued influence on policy discussion for reducing educational inequalities. The research of **Maras** and **Parsons** have thus provided important evidence and nuance on behaviour problems and exclusion policies to inform government policy and help school leaders ensure better long-term outcomes for vulnerable children.

Informing Irish national guidance on needs of students with special educational needs (SEN)
Research by **Maras** has also been used by the **National Council for Special Education (NCSE)**, an independent statutory body set up by order of the **Irish Minister for Education and Science** in December 2003. The NCSE supports a network of schools, parents and other professionals to provide resources for children with SEN throughout Ireland. A **report commissioned by the NCSE [5.9]** drew on research by **Maras** to demonstrate and identify the need to consider variations in needs in students with SEN, the importance of access to SEN-specific support, and factors such as increased social challenges and lower academic perceptions, related to poorer school transitions. Based on **Maras'** research, the report highlights the need for research to compare and contrast the individual experiences of young people with differing types of SEN. This NCSE report has subsequently been used in presentations on positive transition given by the NCSE **[5.10]**, aimed at better informing teachers in preparing children with SEN for primary to secondary school transition and is linked as an **online resource on the Mapping Out of School Time (MOST) website** (http://www.most.ie/TP1Resources.html). These online resources were aimed at primary and secondary school teachers and practitioners working in community settings in Ireland to better support children with educational transitions.

Informing policy and advocacy by international charities/NGOs on the impact and experiences of Bullying in vulnerable children
Monks' research on bullying **[3.5]** has impacted policy for vulnerable youth globally, via use by international organizations. **The United Nations Children's Fund,** UNICEF, which works for the health, safety, and rights of children worldwide, used the research in their 2014 global report *"Hidden in Plain Sight: A statistical analysis of violence against children* **[5.11]** which cited work on risk factors for bullying and marginalization by peers **[3.5]**. Findings on the scope of the problem including high prevalence of bullying within residential facilities **[3.5]** were cited in **the Australian NGO CREATE** Foundation's report on children and young people's experiences of out-of-home care **[5.12]**. CREATE is a national organization that supports children in care and creates systemic change based on their experiences and opinions, with offices in all the states and territories of Australia, and over 23,000 child members.

5. Sources to corroborate the impact

1. National Institute for Health and Care Excellence guidelines. (2017). *Child abuse and neglect: recognising, assessing and responding to abuse and neglect of children and young people*, cited 22 times between p446-555. https://www.nice.org.uk/guidance/ng76/documents/draft-guideline
2. Promoting good behaviour in schools Policy and practice guidance, Northamptonshire Country Council (2015).

https://www.northamptonshire.gov.uk/councilservices/children-families-education/SEND/local-offer/Downloads/PolicyPracticeGuide%20290915%20(3).pdf

3. Bennett Review (2017): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/602487/Tom_Bennett_Independent_Review_of_Behaviour_in_Schools.pdf

4. Timpson review (2019): https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/807862/Timpson_review.pdf

5. Hampshire County Council report (2013, Autumn). https://documents.hants.gov.uk/supportingvulnerablecypandthevirtualschoolforcicinhampshirebriefingsheetno2-7892.pdf

6. Barnes-Holmes, Y., Scanlon, G., Desmond, D., Shevlin, M., & Vahey, N. (2013). *A Study of Transition from Primary to Post-primary School for Pupils with Special Educational Needs.* National Council For Special Education Research Report No. 12. National Council for Special Education, cited 14 times between p1-p69. https://ncse.ie/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Transitions_23_03_13.pdf

7. London Borough of Waltham Forest. (2019). *A review of inclusion & alternative provision*, p6, para 5. https://walthamforest.gov.uk/sites/default/files/Review%20of%20Alternative%20Provision%20Report%20APPROVED.pdf

8. Long, R., & Danechi, S. (2020). *Off-rolling in English schools*. Research Briefing CBP-8444, 21 February 2020, p14, para 2. https://commonslibrary.parliament.uk/research-briefings/cbp-8444/

9. Mill, M., & Thomson, P. (2018). *Investigative Research into Alternative Provisioning.* Report by IFF Research commissioned by the Department for Education, p38, para 1. https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/748910/Investigative_research_into_alternative_provision.pdf

10. NCSE (2017). *Transition from Primary to Post-Primary for Pupils with Special Educational Needs: Promoting Positive Teaching and Learning Environments*. Presentation made available online National Council for Special Education. https://www.sess.ie/sites/default/files/inline-files/Transition%20from%20Primary%20to%20Post-Primary%20for%20Children%20with%20SEN.pdf

11. UNICEF, Report (2014). *Hidden in plain sight: a statistical analysis of violence against children,* cited on p13, para 3. https://data.unicef.org/resources/hidden-in-plain-sight-a-statistical-analysis-of-violence-against-children/

12. McDowall, J. J. (2013, Autumn). *Experiencing out-of-home care in Australia: The views of children and young people (CREATE Report Card 2013).* Sydney: CREATE Foundation, cited on p94, para 2. https://create.org.au/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/2013-CRE065-F-CREATE-Report-Card-2013-Web-File-web.pdf. For further evidence on CREATE, please see: https://create.org.au/who-we-are/our-story/.