

Workstream 1: Children and Young People in Migration

**Convener: Professor Stephen Briggs
CSWR Director**

This workstream identified key strategic objectives for 2019, encompassing the ambition to build on the achievements of the previous year, including the strengthening of the Advisory Group through the introduction of a range of expertise. The objectives were:

1. Continuing to build networks
2. Increasing communication including through the website of key issues and developments, including addressing negative narratives
3. Building collaborations within UK and internationally
4. Offering events and training for practitioners, including a further seminar
5. Aiming to publish e.g. in Trade press
6. Exploring research opportunities including funding applications

The context for our activities is provided by national policies that continue to generate negative narratives about migration, through the hostile environment, nationalist and exclusivist policies, and turning away from the international, national and local needs. These policies have tragic consequences. We continue to strive, to challenge the assumptions and practices arising from these policies, to provide counter-arguments, to address the issues faced by individuals and groups and to connect and collaborate with other organisations in the field. We aim to support practitioners, often faced with intolerable conflicts and to challenge practices that reduce or deny individual rights, a sense of belonging and security.

Advisory Group members have actively contributed to the workstream objectives; we have focused on gathering knowledge of members' activities, sharing these and developing support for each other's initiatives in the group and through the B-MAG communication channels, including the website and social media. Some examples, and highlights, include:

Nick Watts, Together with Migrant Children (TWMC), reported legal work, including three judicial reviews for 'No recourse to public funds' (NRPF) cases, working with a group of six charities to write Section 17 guidance for families, and linking with other Advisory Group members to coordinate referrals for individuals seeking advice with their renewed immigration status. 80% of TWMC's current work is on challenging government including through judicial reviews, alongside outreach and casework addressing destitution and street homelessness, NRPF and age assessments.

CFAB awareness initiatives included; National Kinship Week 5-11 October, and (2) Global Social Services Workforce 21-25 Oct; where CFAB focus will be 'children on the move'. CFAB developed an early help support project working with families reunited in the UK under the Dubs 3 regulation. The 3-year project will evaluate how local authorities should be working to support and enhance migrants' experiences.

Domenica Pecoraro addressed the current situation in Kent where arriving children and young people will now stay in Kent rather than being dispersed, as numbers are now not at the threshold for dispersal. Children, however, are at risk of exploitation with no support, often relying on friends or they disappear off the radar. There are moves for former unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC) to be reunited with families. Numbers in Kent approximately 800-900 people, including 16-19 year-olds (and up to 25s).

Ana Draper, Coram and Tavistock, drew attention to the experiences of torture, sexual abuse and imprisonment experienced by young migrants on the journey, and the question thus raised about international safeguarding. The workstream is continuing to discuss and work on this and related issues.

We began a collaboration with Kassel University, Germany. Following a visit by Stephen Briggs in December 2018 to Kassel to work with the students on the social work course, Kassel students visited UEL for a three day event on working with Migrant and BME children, young people and families. This included presentations and discussion in UEL, including a keynote by Amma Anane-Agyei – ‘who am I? - exploring self and cultural understanding and knowledge. Visits to local organisations were arranged and the Kassel group, led by Professor Reinhard Lindner took part in an Advisory Group Meeting. Further exchanges and collaboration are planned.

In training, TWMC presented at an event focused on linguistics and migration in February 2019 and provide teaching for social work students at RHUL. CFAB also delivers training, funded by Esmee Fairbairn, aimed at local authority social workers who lack knowledge of cross-border cases, currently reaching out to 300, and a further 300 by the end of this year. Thereafter, the intention is to offer enhanced training on how to work with cross border families, and kinship placements for children overseas. CFAB also delivering training overseas, sharing UK models of practice/assessments and making it relevant for the specific country.

Ana Draper has written chapters on unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC); supporting social workers, and a psychiatric manual looking at the mental health needs of UASC.

In summary, therefore, in this workstream, the activities have addressed the strategic objectives of continuing to build networks, increasing communication including through the website of key issues and developments, including addressing negative narratives, and building collaborations within UK and internationally. Members’ organisations have contributed to training, research and some written outputs have been produced. An open seminar hosted by B-MAG, UEL and VCF is being planned for 2020.

For 2020, the strategic objectives are similar to last year.

1. to support effective interventions for individuals and groups through communication, practice and training
2. building collaboration in UK and internationally
3. hosting open seminars/webinars on the theme of migration
4. increasing publications from the group
5. identifying and developing appropriate research and evaluation projects, including seeking funding