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UNIVERSITY
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and Society

PROGRESS

MAGAZINE





Bob Doherty,
Dean of the
School for Business
and Society

Foreword

Welcome to the Summer 2023 issue of Progress magazine, which highlights key insights from some of the groundbreaking and impactful research taking place in the University of York's interdisciplinary School for Business and Society. The articles in this issue cover diverse topics, highlighting the wide range of agendas our work addresses in pursuit of our mission to transform business, shape public policy and advance social justice.

For public good

The University of York exists for public good and York's School for Business and Society represents a distinctive new approach towards conducting research and teaching in the UK higher education sector, combining diverse disciplinary strengths in business, management, finance, social and public policy, public management and social care and social

work. With this wide-ranging interdisciplinary expertise we are uniquely placed to lead business and public policy action to tackle complex social and environmental societal grand challenges that cannot be solved by the public, private or third sectors alone.

New ways of thinking

There is an urgent need for new ways of thinking; we need to start living within our planetary boundaries, reduce growing inequalities, and build an economy based on inclusive sustainable growth. In pursuing this agenda our school plays a central role in the University of York's public good mission and draws on the strong social purpose the University of York's founders endowed within it and the rich tradition of thought and action on social justice and combating inequality that is distinctive to the City of York.

Leading by example

Good leadership has a vital role to play in addressing contemporary grand challenges and the first article in this issue of Progress magazine is an interview on lessons in public leadership with Justin Russell, Chief Inspector at His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation. Justin, who is a member of our School's External Advisory Board, reflects on his RSA Lessons in Leadership podcast series.

We report on the The Working Dads Employer Awards, part of our Equal Parenting Project, which recognise employers that have excelled in breaking down barriers preventing all parents from taking on child caring responsibilities and captures best practice case studies. We also highlight findings from a project exploring how small businesses manage mental health that highlights the vital role of building line manager capability.

“There is an urgent need for new ways of thinking; we need to start living within our planetary boundaries, reduce growing inequalities, and build an economy based on inclusive sustainable growth.”

Complex problems

We look at two of the very large funded projects we lead that examine complex issues in a holistic way: FixOurFood, an ambitious multi-disciplinary research programme that aims to understand and build pathways to a more regenerative food system which benefits both human and planetary health; and, the ESRC Vulnerability and Policing Futures Research Centre that examines how policing produces, exacerbates and tackles vulnerability.

Finance and fairness

Two articles explore finance from different angles. We examine research that has grappled with complex questions around how to determine the priority for climate action in a world of multiple needs but limited resources, including the issue of how time should be accounted for when making policy choices. We also highlight findings from a project that has mapped

public spending on children in 84 countries, which shows that in many countries spending is concentrated on the later years of childhood, despite strong evidence that early years programmes bring the greatest benefits.

Injustice and insecurity

We examine the position of domestic worker survivors of human trafficking and explore what the UK might do to better support survivors of trafficking. Finally, with the rising cost-of-living placing huge pressure on many households in recent years, we report on the Changing Realities project, a major participatory online project documenting everyday life on a low income that has provided a powerful voice for change, not only identifying gaps in social security and related support, but also making the case for reform.

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Lessons in Public Leadership

Interview with Justin Russell

Justin Russell joined His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation as Chief Inspector in June 2019 and will serve in this role until May 2024. Justin's previous role, from 2016 to the beginning of 2019, was as Director General, Justice Analysis and Offender Policy at the Ministry of Justice.

Justin started his career as a social researcher in the Home Office and has worked on a wide range of criminal justice issues including as a Senior Policy Adviser on home affairs in the No10 Policy Unit and as Head of the Violent Crime Unit in the Home Office where he led the Ending Gang and Youth Violence Programme and the government's strategy on ending violence against women and girls.

Justin recently gave a Masterclass in Public Leadership at the School, and was a panel speaker at the York Festival of Ideas, discussing "Reimagining Punishment: Do prisons work?".

Sharon Grace sat down to ask him more about public leadership

SG: At the Masterclass you gave in the School you talked about your Lessons in Leadership podcast series, what motivated you to do this?

JR: It's something that we do look at as an Inspectorate. We actually rate local services on their leadership. I've had experience of this myself, having climbed the greasy pole of the civil service and made it into leadership positions. And over the years, I've come to really admire some of the people

that I've worked with, or been mentored by, or got to know. Particularly now, I understand the challenges that they face in the jobs that they were doing.

And I've been thinking about life after being a Chief Inspector. One of the projects I was thinking about was writing a book about public sector leadership, which I think is very different from private sector leadership and has been under-celebrated and under-written about. So I thought, well, if I'm going to write a book, maybe it would involve me interviewing leaders from the public sector. One of the side products of that might be to think about turning those interviews into a podcast series. And I managed to persuade the Royal Society of Arts to sponsor the production cost of that.

So we got a professional producer in and recorded six podcasts. They featured a range of people: a couple of people who had been Permanent Secretaries of government departments, one of them a friend, one of them my mentor actually; and a couple of people who've done proper frontline jobs as leaders, someone who's been an amazing prison governor, turning around a failing prison, and a very inspirational headteacher in an inner London comprehensive. And then, I was quite interested in the theory behind leadership as well. So I interviewed someone from Harvard Business School who's one of the great experts on leadership and theories of leadership to provide a bit of a framework for it all.

SG: It sounds really interesting. I remember at the seminar you had quotes from them about what it was to be a leader. What would you give if you had five key characteristics or skills that a public sector leader needed to have? What would you list?

JR: Well, where I ended up was focusing on the three domains, which are part of what's called the Primary Colors Model of Leadership, which felt like a very intuitive and relatable model. It was relevant to people in the public sector. It wasn't about the sorts of things that corporate leaders have to think about. It starts with the ability to set a vision for your organisation and a longer-term strategy. Then it talks about how you engage your people, your staff, your senior team in that vision. So your ability to engage with people. And then, it talks about whether you can deliver. Can you use that engagement to actually deliver change and improvement on the ground? So it's all very well being popular and engaging and a nice person and having a fancy mission statement, but does it actually drive reductions in waiting lists or crime reductions or whatever it is that your organization is leading? And in some ways, that's the trick, isn't it?

SG: It's the balance between strategy and operation. That's sometimes where the wheels come off. So people can have really good visions and missions and can tell a very good story, but underneath that, there are people with jobs and activities and things to do. And I think it's often harder

to bring people with you as a good leader, to get them to be part of the mission rather than be told this is their mission. Can you give an example of a public leader that achieved this?

JR: One of the people I interviewed was Michael Barber, who I worked with when I was in the policy unit at Number 10, when he ran Tony Blair's Delivery Unit, and he's become a bit of a global guru on what he calls "deliverology." He's provided advice to people like Justin Trudeau in Canada, the Australian government, and the government in Pakistan. And he's been able to market this vision of how you translate the overall strategy into actual delivery on the ground.

The key elements of that, is what the delivery chain actually links: you in the government department or in the national organization with the people who are teaching in the classroom or running prisons or out on the beat in the police service. And how you deliver ambitious goals, particularly where those are delivery goals. And that was a big part of New Labour, to set some quite challenging targets. So it was quite target-driven the way that government operated, and then chase down targets, whether that was around street crime or immigration numbers or famously around NHS performance.

Actually, at that time, it seemed to work. They did deliver reductions in waiting times in A&E, and all the rest of it, and it didn't happen by accident. It happened because

there was a theory of change, a theory of delivery which they were able to follow through on, and Michael Barber's unit was quite an important part of authoring and enabling Tony Blair to hold the Department of Health and the Home Office accountable.

SG: Do you think that had to do with things like key performance indicators? Or was it something more fundamental?

JR: I think the key insight he had was if you set a target, then you have to come up with the trajectory that over time delivers that target. So if you're saying you're going to halve the number of people waiting for an operation in two years' time, then how? What's your trajectory that gets you there? What are the actions that convincingly make it happen and then how can you really probe and challenge people on this? Does that story and are these actions sufficient to deliver that scale of improvement? Have you got the right leadership in place to deliver it? Have you got the real discipline around how convincing your plan is to deliver? And Michael carved out time in Tony Blair's diary with each of the key delivery departments, to have a delivery stocktake. It's very easy to be knocked off track by day-to-day events. It was the creation of routine and space that protected time to think about delivery and reviewing progress rather than just being fixated on a theoretical outcome further down the road.

Finance and the ethics of climate policy



The overwhelming consensus amongst physical and environmental scientists is that governments must take urgent actions to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Yet climate science alone does not, and cannot, dictate climate policy. Ministers are facing a constant barrage of demands for greater funding. Normal public services – including health care, education, and social care – are becoming ever-more expensive to deliver. Governments must also protect society from other severe potential threats, including future pandemics and terrorist attacks.

To help determine the priority for climate action in a world of multiple needs but limited resources, academics have created models that integrate the latest climate science with cutting edge economics. William Nordhaus (Yale) was awarded a Nobel Prize in 2018 for his work in this field. Economists add two crucial elements to these models: (i) estimates of the relationship between climate change damages, expressed in monetary terms, and future changes in temperature, and (ii) how time should be accounted for when making policy choices.

Professor Mark Freeman’s work focuses on time. Collaborating with Ben Groom (Exeter), Moritz Drupp (Hamburg), and Frikk Nesje (Copenhagen), he asks: “In a world with no inflation, would you sacrifice £50 so that one of your great-great-great grandchildren can receive £100?”. This is highly relevant for the climate change debate because CO₂ remains in the atmosphere for many centuries. Benefits from what we spend today to reduce emissions are experienced into the very distant future.

Ethics lie at the heart of this question. Many argue that, as all human life is equally valuable, we should consider the welfare of future generations as we would our own. Others, calling to agent-relative ethics, say instead that we most value people who are closest to us, so greatest weight should be given to the current generation. Most economists also expect global societies to get wealthier over the next century. Strong climate policy may therefore make the unusual choice of taxing the poorer present for the benefit of the richer future.

Rather than directly addressing these complex matters, many governments prefer instead to look at financial markets. When you save, you are also foregoing consumption now for gains in the future. Yields to Treasury bonds therefore reveal investors' views about how the future should be valued compared to the present. But this is controversial. Critics argue that governments should not effectively delegate complex social and ethical considerations to those pursuing private profits.

These issues are further complicated by the partisan nature of the debate, particularly in the United States. According to the Pew Research Centre, 59% of Democrats see climate change as an urgent policy priority compared to only 13% of Republicans. Recently, the Supreme Court intervened to allow the Biden administration to change the way that time is incorporated

into climate policy analysis after its proposals were successfully challenged by eleven Republican states in the courts of Louisiana.

“To help determine the priority for climate action in a world of multiple needs but limited resources, academics have created models that integrate the latest climate science with cutting edge economics.”

Mark and his colleagues have made two main contributions to this field. Using technical models of bond yields and other variables, they have examined the way that time should be treated differently for very long-term projects, such as

climate change mitigation, when compared to shorter maturity policies and projects. They have also surveyed recommendations on matters of time from both expert economists and philosophers. This work provides evidence on the extent of, and rationales for, expert disagreement on these issues, and how policy makers should mediate between conflicting views.

In addition, Mark and colleagues have worked with a number of governmental bodies including HM Treasury and the Office for National Statistics. Most recently, their work has been cited by the EU Parliament in its resolution ahead of COP26, the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in its latest draft estimates of the social damage caused by greenhouse gas emissions, and by Executive Offices of the President in proposed updates to general Federal cost-benefit analysis methods for regulatory analysis and public spending appraisal.

Mark's work is broadly supportive of the scientists' view. The UN Paris climate targets, as well as EPA's latest estimates of the costs of emitting greenhouse gases, can be justified despite the many other claims on the public purse. But there is no financial case for pursuing net zero at all costs. Other services need resourcing, the political and legal landscapes are challenging, and new technologies, such as effective carbon capture, need to be developed. There is much more to the policy choice than just the climate science.

Managing Mental Health in Small Businesses

Mental health conditions are a leading cause of disability worldwide. Annually 12.8 million working days are lost in the UK due to work-related stress, depression and anxiety with the estimated cost to UK business of poor mental health at a staggering £45bn. The impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on workplace wellbeing has brought it in to sharp focus among policy makers and organisations. Despite this increased awareness, the evidence base for how small and micro business support mental health is missing. This is surprising given small and micro businesses make up a significant proportion of global economies – in the UK, over a third of private sector employment is in small organisations. Small businesses are drivers of economic growth and recovery and can contribute significantly to broadening employment opportunities, social inclusion, and poverty reduction.

Juggling on a tightrope

Jane Suter, a Senior Lecturer in work and employment, set out to address this evidence gap, through

research with small business managers with direct experience of supporting an employee in mental distress. Findings revealed a picture of small business managers ‘juggling on a tightrope’ as they attempted to respond to individual needs alongside concerns for the business and remaining workforce. Small business managers often acted with compassion but with little experience and training they struggled to navigate a delicate balance between support and performance management. Effective support in this context needs to reconcile the needs of the employer with those of the employee and in a manner that does not cause further distress to either party. Small business managers emphasised how presenteeism created a greater cognitive toil than absence, partly out of concern for the ongoing health of the employee but also the impact on the wider business. This surprised the research team, as they expected sickness absence to be a greater issue given resource constraints for small business.

Are small businesses different?

The research team were interested in whether small businesses are different to their larger counterparts. Small businesses have limited resources, less access to human resource expertise and



occupational health practitioners, and fewer opportunities for redeployment that might benefit some employees with mental health difficulties. They

also tend to feature informal employment relations and fewer formal policies and procedures. These contextual features shaped responses but small business managers did not necessarily have a unique approach to managing mental health. Support aligned to current understanding of good practice, with managers offering accommodations such as 1-1 support meetings, adjustments in hours, and flexible approaches to work scheduling and location.

A key feature was the swift impact of one employee’s mental health, which could permeate the entire workforce, particularly as many of these small businesses were located in close-knit physical and social proximity. To put it into perspective, in a small business with 10 employees the reduced productivity or absence of one employee equates to 10% of the workforce.

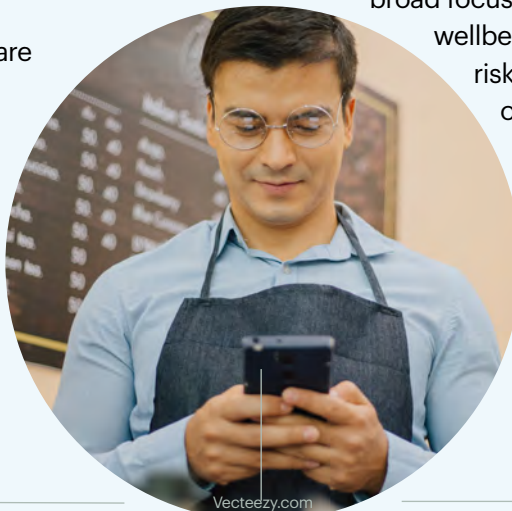
Despite this, small businesses are not necessarily constrained in their ability to support employees. Indeed an advantage for these small business managers was their more personal and informal approach to employee relations. This reflects what we know more broadly about the importance of

quality relationships between line managers and employees.

“Small business managers often acted with compassion but with little experience and training they struggled to navigate a delicate balance between support and performance management.”

The central role of line managers

Line managers are the linchpins of employee experience. Building line manager capability is a defining feature of high impact Human Resource



Management functions. Organisations which fail to nurture effective line management often see their cultures suffering. The famous adage ‘people leave managers, not companies’ rings true. Yet, balancing everyone’s needs can take an emotional toll on managers themselves. The research team’s findings illustrate how attempts to balance tensions fall predominantly to one individual in a small business and this balancing act will resonate with line managers on the front line in organisations of all sizes. This points to a need to focus on supporting the wellbeing of managers, in addition to investment in management skills.

A distinction between workplace wellbeing and mental health problems

It is welcome to see mental health and wellbeing spoken about more openly, and moving up political and organisation agendas. However, a

broad focus on workplace wellbeing runs the risk of focussing on training employees to be more ‘mindful’ and resilient to demanding working conditions, putting the



onus on the individual. Better quality jobs, decent line management, autonomy, and flexible working can address work-related stress stemming from within the workplace. However, there is also a need to equip managers to help employees experiencing mental distress, while recognising some mental health problems do not have simple solutions and often originate from outside the workplace. Mental health training should move beyond stigma reduction, symptom recognition and workplace adjustments, towards building manager skills and confidence to broach emergent concerns and conduct difficult conversations. Public investment in one-to-one in-employment support could be useful, particularly for employees in small organisations without access to employee assistance programmes, and those who might value support independent from their employer.

Mapping public spending on children around the world: too little, too late?

Early childhood is a key stage for physical and cognitive development, and experiences in the early years of life have an enormous, long-term impact on both individuals and societies. Yet, little is known about how public finance is allocated by age, particularly outside of the high-income Organisation for Economic and Cooperation Development (OECD) countries.

Working in collaboration with the UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre and the Center on Poverty and Social Policy at Columbia University, John Hudson and Sophie Mackinder, with support from Kit Colliver, Naomi Finch,

Dan Horsfall and Antonios Roumpakis, recently completed a project that aimed to address this gap in knowledge.

Age specific spending profiles

Adapting a method developed by the OECD, and making use of the best available sources of data on public finance, the research team computed age specific spending profiles that quantify the allocation of public spending by age (from pre-birth to early 20s) and area of spending (e.g. education, cash benefits).

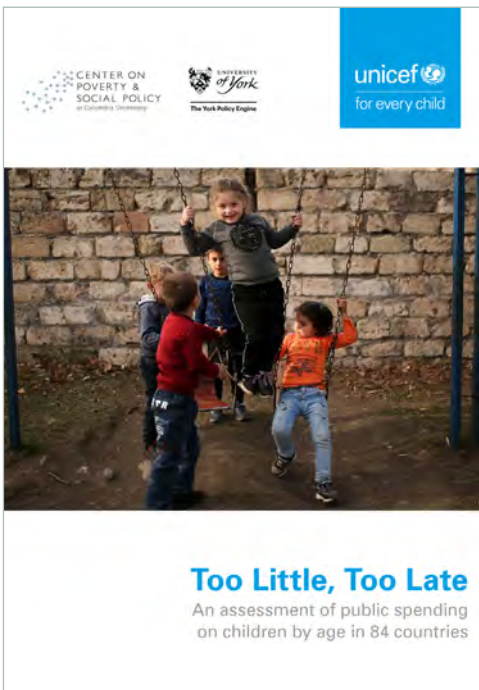
Limitations in the quality of data presented challenges in this task – for many countries there was insufficient data and information was less fine grained than for OECD countries – but the team was able to compute profiles 84 countries across the world representing approximately 58 percent of children and young people worldwide.

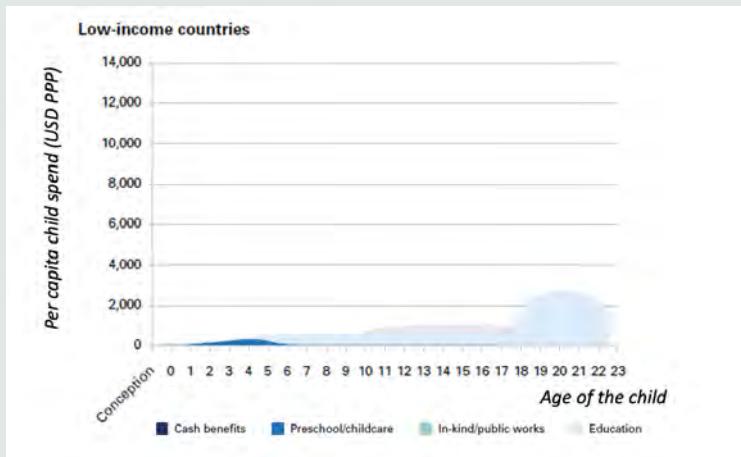
The work constitutes the first comparative mapping of how and when public expenditure on children is managed across the child's life course in low- and middle-income countries, alongside profiles of high-income settings, providing vital information on how much is spent on children at different points in the life course.

“Most countries fail to make the early childhood investments that protect children’s rights, ensure their well-being, and secure them a better futures.”

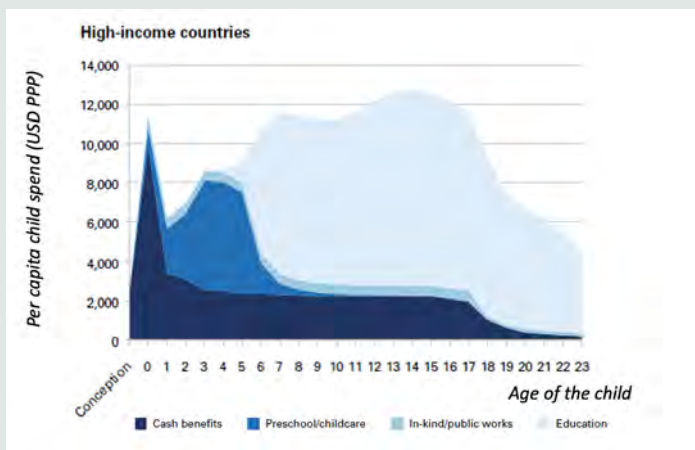
Too little, too late

The profiles bring into the sharpest relief how little public expenditure makes its way to children, particularly the youngest children, worldwide. Findings from the work were published by UNICEF in *Too Little, Too Late*, the report's title summarising the core finding of the research: that most countries fail to make the early childhood investments that protect children's rights, ensure their well-being, and secure them a better future.





Source: UNICEF (2023) Too Little, Too Late: An assessment of public spending on children by age in 84 countries



Source: UNICEF (2023) Too Little, Too Late: An assessment of public spending on children by age in 84 countries

high-income countries, public expenditure tends to be backloaded rather than frontloaded, the most recent estimates showing that, up to the age of 18, on average the share of child spending reserved for the under 6s is only:

- 6.7% in low-income countries;
- 8.2% in low-middle-income countries;
- 11.5% in upper-middle-income countries; and,
- 27% in high-income countries.

The profiles also highlighted how little is being spent in many countries. While high-income countries spend US\$195,000 per child capita up to the age of 18 on average, in low-income countries the figure is just US\$2,300 per child and in low-middle-income countries US\$13,600.

Urgent need for change

Addressing the too late, too late problem of public spending on children is key if inequalities both within and between countries are to be addressed. Despite the Sustainable Development Goals including a commitment to ending poverty in all its forms everywhere, child poverty remains widespread and fewer than one in two children worldwide receive any form of social protection. In the poorest countries – where more than two in every five children live in extreme poverty – more money is spent managing debt than paying for social welfare.

The argument that investment in the early years brings the greatest returns has been prominent in policy discourse in recent decades, especially in high-income countries. Indeed, a recent study by Nobel laureate James Heckman – who spoke at the UNICEF expert consultation at which the Too Little, Too Late report findings

were launched – estimated that the lifetime benefits of a high-quality early childhood programme equated to a return of \$7.3 for each dollar of spending.

Yet, the profiles computed for Too Little, Too Late show that in the majority of low- and middle income settings, as well as in some

Impactful work by the Equal Parenting Project to drive change: The Working Dads Employer Awards

The Equal Parenting Project was formed back in 2017 with the aim of using academic research to help break down barriers preventing all parents from taking on childcaring responsibilities, particularly in the first year after birth or adoption. The project team are committed to undertaking impactful research to help make positive change within organisations and at a statutory policy level. To achieve this, the Equal Parenting Project's areas of activity include the Working Dads Employer Awards which were co-developed by the Equal Parenting Project and Music Football Fatherhood, the Father in the Workplace Toolkit and the Flexible Working and Future of Work project.

Why were the Working Dads Employer Awards created?

The Working Dads Employer Awards were created by the Equal Parenting Project and Music Football Fatherhood to recognise and celebrate organisations that are doing great work to support working dads. The awards are

open to all employers in the UK regardless of size (i.e., micro-business to large multinational). Another key aim of the awards is about encouraging organisations to look at their practice and think about how they can improve their support for working dads so, as well as awarding outstanding activity, we produce good practice case studies from some of the winners which can help inspire other organisations to up their game. The awards consist of four categories including Flexible Working, Parenting Policies, Support for Returning Fathers, and Leadership and Culture. Organisations can select the categories they submit to and they supply detailed information about their activity, processes and communication as part of the submission process.

Tell us a little bit about the ceremony

The awards took place in Westminster and were hosted by Andrew Gwynne MP with Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP (Chair of the Women and Equalities Committee)



Left to right Elliot Rae, Andrew Gwynne MP, Rt Hon Caroline Nokes MP, Dr Sarah Forbes and Dr Holly Birkett

and Anna Whitehouse (Journalist and Broadcaster) also presenting awards. From amongst the winners, one in each category is selected to be a case study and what is really great is that a senior member of the organisation gives a talk that is informative of what they offer to support working dads in that select category. This year we also had one of the dads who has benefited from their employer's policies and support talk about his own experience of spending time with his new child which was particularly inspirational for the audience. The



wellbeing of families. All organisations that enter the awards, whether they win or not, will receive research informed feedback to aide in further progressing their support for working fathers. Being seen to be a good practice employer in this area through a robust judging process can also help organisations with recruitment and retention in a competitive jobs market and demonstrates that an organisation is working hard to counter some of the negative Equality, Diversity and Inclusion implications of COVID-19.

Lastly, these awards aim to help drive positive change amongst other organisations wishing to improve their support for working dads but may currently be unclear of how to go about this. As a means of supporting positive change in this area, the Equal Parenting Project develop case studies from select winners of the awards in each category. As mentioned, during the ceremony there was one organisation in each category that was selected and given the opportunity to give a talk during the ceremony. After the ceremony, we work with them to create both a video and written case study. These case studies will help other organisations understand how to begin the journey to implement more support and the core benefits that can accrued for the organisation when they implement the changes in the specific area. Our aim is to ensure that other organisations understand how they too can begin the journey to better supporting working dads.

feedback we have received from organisations and attendees of the awards has been overwhelmingly positive with many saying they learned a lot from the speeches given by case study organisations.

Who won awards this year?

From amongst a variety of submissions the judges determined the Leadership and Culture category winners were Aon UK, British Medical Journal and John Lewis Partnership. In the Flexible Working category the winner was E.ON UK. The judges of the Support for Returning Fathers agreed the

winners were PwC UK LLP and Vodafone UK. Finally, winners within the Parenting Policies category included Suffolk County Council, QBE, Vodafone UK and E.ON UK.

What are the benefits for organisations to enter the awards?

The awards, not only celebrate current employers, but give companies the opportunity to further break down the gendered barriers to child-caring in order to promote gender equality in the workplace, reduce the gender pay-gap, and enhance the

Fixing the food system in Yorkshire



At a time when food banks have become the second largest food suppliers in the UK, there is an urgency to scrutinise and improve a food system that is no longer fit for purpose. FixOurFood, is an ambitious multi-disciplinary research programme based in the School for Business and Society which aims to understand and build pathways to a more regenerative food system for Yorkshire – which benefits both human and planetary health.

Led by Professor Bob Doherty, Dean of School, the programme has three main strands – optimising regenerative farming practices through farmer-led co-designed plot trials, improving school food so that it is more accessible, healthy, tasty and nutritious at the same time as being planet friendly and developing hybrid business economies with purpose driven businesses that champion local communities and the planet alongside profit.

To support the three key research areas, colleagues are working with multiple stakeholders to better understand policy and governance in the region – most recently through co-development of the local food action plan for Sheffield alongside the City’s local food partnership ShefFood. This ‘Action Research’ approach has also been adopted in the creation of Grow It York – an award-winning vertical urban farm housed in a shipping container in the centre of York. The researchers are not only fine-tuning the way the crops are grown for optimal yield and nutritional value, but are also looking at potential

business models that could allow replication of this type of urban farm in other locations.

“The School for Business and Society at York is well placed to pull together multi-disciplinary teams to solve the wicked societal problems that face us today. We have utilised the Three Horizons framework in FixOurFood to identify areas of action that are most likely to transform the Yorkshire food system. Extensive and ongoing engagement with stakeholders across the region and beyond, ensures that voices from all parts of the food system are heard,” says Professor Doherty.

Understanding the implications of change are critical if we are to improve the food system – which is full of complex inter-dependencies. To this end, one of the areas of research is modelling the outcomes of system change. Colleagues are developing a dashboard interface so that those considering interventions can easily explore ideas and immediately see the implications their changes could have to the food system in the short and longer term.

Funded by the UKRI through the Transforming UK Food Systems Strategic Priorities Fund, the £6 million programme has successfully attracted significant additional funding, most recently to work on the complex process of auto enrolment for free school meals. The aim is to create and share an approach that all local authorities can adopt – ensuring increased access to food by young people.

FixOurFood is keen to support students to have a voice about

school food and planetary impact. The programme’s ‘Leaders for Change’, is a cohort of students from schools in the region who are passionate to see change and reduce inequality in the food system. They are included and supported in the work of FixOurFood at all levels, from citizen science research through to lobbying MPs.

Shortening supply chains and making local food procurement a reality for large public organisations is also on the research agenda. FixOurFood has created an Anchor Institutions Platform, bringing together the largest public food procurers in the region and is looking into the practicalities of creating a dynamic food procurement platform – allowing local SMEs to collectively supply the demands of these large public food buyers.

A clear steer from stakeholders who attended the first FixOurFood Food System Summit held in Harrogate earlier this year, was to push forward the idea of creating a Food Systems Council for Yorkshire. This body will draw together all the existing networks and key players in the region to work together to action ideas that have been identified as having the potential to drive significant food system change. FixOurFood will act as the anchor point for the inception of the Council, with the hope that ultimately it will be one of the legacies left by the programme after it draws to a close in January 2026.

Resetting the relationship between vulnerability and policing through research

Funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), Vulnerability and Policing Futures is a research centre examining how policing produces, exacerbates and tackles vulnerability.

Hosted by the University of York and the University of Leeds, the £10 million Centre (with £8.23 million contributions from ESRC) looks at how the police and other services can better collaborate to address vulnerabilities.

They bring together internationally renowned researchers and many local, national and international partners. By working with police partner organisations, government departments, local authorities, charities and people

experiencing vulnerability, the Centre can take on board diverse perspectives to develop bold, integrated solutions.

Why now?

The nature and causes of vulnerabilities are complex and dynamic. The police are increasingly drawn into policing vulnerable people, and the relationships between the police and partners have become more closely entwined.

Problems such as modern slavery and county lines drug trafficking have increased. These add to longer-standing challenges, such as domestic abuse, homelessness and mental illness. Many of these issues relate to existing social inequalities and cut across the

work of numerous public services.

Public services therefore need to work together on vulnerabilities with clear roles and shared purpose. Cuts to services mean the police frequently act as 'the service of first resort' in responding to a wide range of social problems involving vulnerable people. At the same time, the public have growing concerns about the role and priorities of the police. Additionally, the transformation in the availability of linked data and its use are beginning to reshape how public services operate. This requires us to think about how to work in ethically sensitive ways with data to understand and respond to vulnerability.

All these societal challenges raise fundamental questions about the nature of policing; how should organisations work together with vulnerable groups to respond to these challenges and create positive societal change?

Programme of work

The substantial programme of work is combining data science with qualitative insights, enabling the researchers to produce robust evidence that will be at the heart of debates about policing vulnerability.



Research

1. Place-based analyses of vulnerabilities

Place is central in understanding the relationships between vulnerability and policing services. The research examines how vulnerability develops in urban areas, initially across Bradford is drawing together public sector datasets (police, health, social services and education) and research to understand how different agencies interact. From this, the team is looking to identify the potential to reduce harm through organisations' responses to vulnerabilities.

2. Vulnerability-related policing problems

This programme of research focuses on how the police and partners can best work together to respond to specific vulnerabilities. The Centre is investigating exploitation by county lines drug networks, online child sexual victimisation, domestic abuse, modern slavery, and the policing of mental illness and homelessness.

3. Research into action through public and policy engagement

This research will examine public priorities and understanding of policing, as well as the appetite for change. The researchers will combine research into public opinion with their programme to embed research evidence into policy, practice and public debate. By doing this, the Centre aims to create a new understanding of vulnerability and transform how organisations work together to prevent harm and future

vulnerabilities. Through conducting this work, the team aims to reset the relationship between vulnerability and policing.

“The £10 million centre looks at how the police and other services can better collaborate to address vulnerabilities.”

Progress to date

Launched in May 2022, the Centre is just over a year into its initial five-year funding cycle at the time of writing, and has seven separate research projects underway, led by a range of its 27 Co-Investigators (across 13 institutions). Three data science projects have been completed by early career data scientists at the Leeds Institute for Data Analytics and three more are under way. Five £25K grants have been awarded to early career researchers at five different institutions, to deliver 12-month co-produced projects, and thanks to further funding from the Faculty of Social Sciences at York, four additional projects have been established, to extend the Centre's reach.

A number of Centre colleagues are employed within the School for Business and Society at York, including: Centre Co-Director, Professor Charlie Lloyd; Centre Deputy Co-Director, Dr Kate Brown; Centre Manager, Roz Cumming; Centre Coordinator, Sophie Caswell-Jones; Centre Researchers, Dr Chris Devany, Dr Tobias Kammergaard and Dr Öznur Yardımcı; and Centre Co-Investigators, Professor Sharon Grace, Professor Martin Webber, and Dr Joanne Bretherton. Numerous other colleagues are involved with the Centre across different departments at York and of course at Leeds and partner institutions. The Centre is also working closely with its 38+ formal partner organisations, not least to realise its ambitions around both co-production and policy engagement.

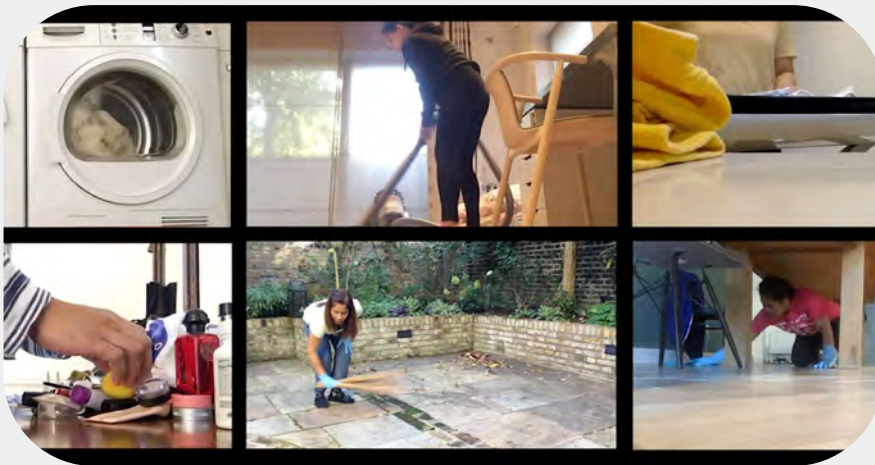
For more information visit the website: vulnerabilitypolicing.org.uk

Contact: vulnerabilitypolicing@york.ac.uk

Follow the Centre: @VP_Centre



Modern slavery and Filipino domestic workers: Reintegration for survivors of trafficking



In collaboration with Dr Ella Parry-Davis from King's College London, Dr Joyce Jiang's research looks at the outcomes for domestic worker survivors of human trafficking who return to the Philippines as their country of origin. It draws on 22 online interviews conducted in June-July 2022 with returnee survivors in the Philippines.

The report finds that domestic worker survivors of trafficking face prohibitive barriers to accessing support for sustainable reintegration in the Philippines, and are at severe risk of re-trafficking. Certain survivors are particularly exposed to the risk of re-trafficking due to stigmatisation and discrimination relating to gender, age, and a perception of domestic work as unskilled. The report concludes that the Philippines cannot currently

be considered a country of origin where effective, appropriate and accessible support is in place for survivors of trafficking.

Livelihood, economic security and debt

59% (13) of our interviewees gained some income from employment or a small business (with others relying on borrowed money and family support) but the same number said that they could not meet the cost of basic needs, education or healthcare: 'Sometimes I borrow food just to have a meal for a day' (Sabrina). Survivors whose salaries have been withheld, or who have not had the right to work while being assessed in systems such as the UK's National Referral Mechanism, are unable to save enough to start businesses or support sustainable recovery.

Interviewees reported continuing cycles of debt and economic dependency on family members. Beth ran a small shop, but her income was not enough to cover daily needs: 'We might have to get a loan or be indebted to people we know, just to pay off, for example, the hospital bills' (Beth).

Support for survivors

73% (16) of our interviewees had not received any support since their return to the Philippines from government or non-governmental organisations. A key barrier was the cost of travel and providing documents. Some interviewees were not in possession of documents such as their employment contract or medical certificates, with confiscation of documents and withholding of professional healthcare prevalent indicators of trafficking among domestic workers globally.

Animor was trafficked to Saudi Arabia and experienced excessive working hours of up to 20 hours per day. She was 'sold' between employers and attacked by one employer with a knife, and her food and healthcare was withheld, with her weight reducing from 71kg to 46kg. She became severely unwell and pleaded with her employer

to repatriate her. On arrival, she applied for financial assistance through OWWA's DOLE-AKAP scheme to pay for the medical treatment, but was unable to produce her contract as required, as it had been confiscated by her employer: 'I begged them to give me the assistance to be able to have proper medication for my illness but they just ignored me. I haven't tried again because I always fail, they just ignore me' (Animor). She was unable to afford hospital bills, and shortly after the interview, Animor died of her illness.

Trafficking can also result in broken family networks and stigmatisation that leave survivors isolated. Interviewees reported being seen as failures if they returned to the Philippines without significant savings. This stigmatisation is more severe for women, who are seen to have failed in their roles as mothers and daughters, and can be compounded by survivors' own feelings of shame and guilt.

Risks of re-trafficking

77% (17) of the interviewees said that they had plans to migrate again, and 7 of these had already taken steps towards this. Economic and housing insecurity and the costs of education and healthcare were key factors in this decision.

Interviewees were aware of the risks of being re-trafficked, but felt that economic and familial pressures made a future in the Philippines impossible. 'I am also unsure of what could happen to me in the new place...I don't know

if I will be able to return home alive' (Maribel). Of those planning to migrate, 2 brought up the risk of age discrimination at the hands of recruiters, which may limit their options for regular migration and therefore make them more susceptible to traffickers.

“Support for a safe and dignified return with sustainable reintegration is not presently accessible to domestic worker survivors of trafficking who return to the Philippines.”

14 Interviewees emphasised that overseas migration could not always be considered a choice: 'Domestic workers are always told, it's your choice to leave the country, it's your choice to leave your family, to work overseas. For me it's not a choice, because

it's the only option... If only everything in the Philippines was in order – from support to protection – why would we leave the country?'

Recommendations (for the UK context)

- Decision-makers must consider that support for a safe and dignified return with sustainable reintegration is not presently accessible to domestic worker survivors of trafficking who return to the Philippines.
- Freedom from Slavery legislation must consider domestic workers' special vulnerabilities and the discrimination they regularly face on return to their country of origin
- All domestic workers in the National Referral Mechanism, irrespective of visa status, must be granted permission to work, assisting them in their recovery and enabling them to support themselves and their families sustainably.
- Reinstate the pre-2012 Overseas Domestic Worker visa, enabling domestic worker survivors of trafficking to rebuild their lives through safe, sustainable employment in the UK
- Ratify the ILO Domestic Workers Convention (189), which calls for the global support and protection of domestic workers.
- Ensure that survivors are in leadership and consultation roles when designing anti-trafficking research and policy

Changing Realities: documenting life on a low income

Changing Realities is a participatory online project documenting life on a low income. Funded by abrdn Financial Fairness Trust, and building on the Nuffield Foundation funded Covid Realities project that ran from 2022-22. The project is led by Ruth Patrick, Senior Lecturer in Social Policy in the School, together with Maddy Power from York's Department of Health Sciences.

Participatory approach

As the cost of living crisis sweeps across the UK, it is more important than ever to listen and learn from people struggling to get by on low

incomes. Changing Realities is a partnership between parents and carers living on low incomes, researchers, and Child Poverty Action Group who are working together to document what everyday life is like during the cost of living crisis.

Changing Realities is enabled by an innovative online dashboard that is the bedrock of the project's work, a bespoke online space for participants to get involved with the project. Participants can write a diary at any time and of any length, they can learn about what is going on in the project or opportunities to get involved elsewhere, for instance speaking at webinars, and they can sign up to Big Ideas groups and other ad hoc groups, such as meetings with policy makers and media training.

The project's governance structures ensure participants can critique the project and shape its future in meaningful ways, including through a Project Advisory Group that six participants serve on, attending meetings to provide feedback, advice and ideas, with a specific focus on the project's participatory approach.

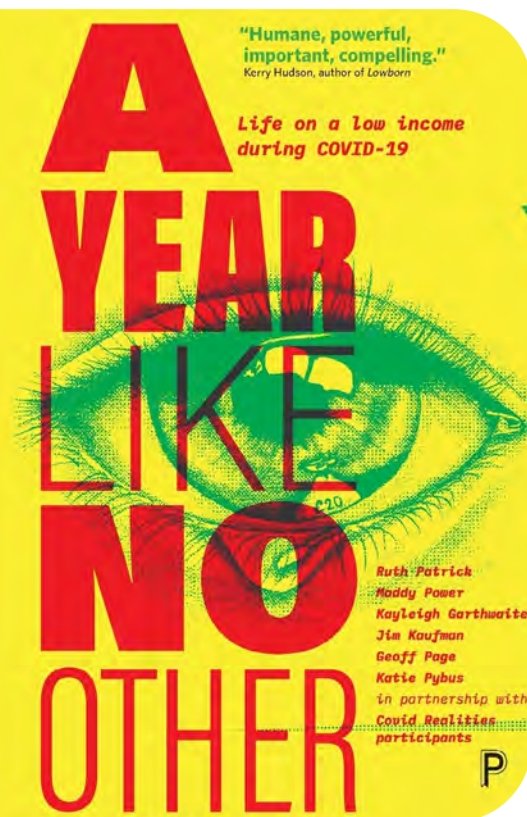
Participation has extended to co-authorship of academic texts. A key output from the Covid Realities was the book *A Year Like No Other* (Policy Press, 2022), which charted the ups and downs of

family life on a low income during the unprecedented times of Covid 19, co-written by the project's researchers in conjunction with the participants of the Covid Realities research project. The book received the Social Policy Association's 2023 *Richard Titmuss Book Award*.

“As the cost of living crisis sweeps across the UK, it is more important than ever to listen and learn from people struggling to get by on low incomes.”

A voice for change

Changing Realities has provided a powerful voice for change, not only identifying gaps in social security and related support,



Project participants and research team members during the Covid Realities Lobby Day



but also making the case for reform. This has included helping participants access prominent media platforms where they have explained the need for change directly. For example: Faith spoke to *The Guardian* newspaper and BBC Radio 4's *Moneybox* about the problem of debt and Kim appeared on BBC Radio 4's *World at One* to give her response to government plans on energy price caps and on BBC Radio 4's *Woman's Hour* where she talked about the pressures arising from the cost of living crisis. The project has also empowered

participants to lobby politicians directly, including a letter from the participants to the Prime Minister that has been quoted in Parliament and displayed in the Wellcome Trust gallery. In June 2023 the project ran a Westminster lobby day in June 2023 where project participants met with MPs to make the case for change. Participants reflecting after the lobby day highlighted the hope and strength arising from the collaborative working the project has fostered, Brain saying "I have learned that I am not the only person suffering

from the hardships of poverty and despite this I am still a part of society that can ask for fairness for all in a challenging world" and Faith saying the day "reminded each one of us that collectively [...] we are changing the story and trajectory of ourselves and our children in finding our purpose in society".

Further information about the Changing Realities project, including over 6,000 diary entries from project participants, can be found online at <https://changingrealities.org/>

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