Celebrating outstanding social and economic impacts of ESRC-funded researchers
Welcome

We encourage and support social scientists to maximise the impact of their work to ensure that excellent, independent research informs decisions across a wide range of policy areas, supports business and innovation, and helps to improve people’s lives in the UK and around the world. Since it was established eight years ago the ESRC’s Celebrating Impact Prize has highlighted many of the ways in which ESRC-funded research impacts upon the economy and society.

The prize is an excellent opportunity for the UK’s world-leading researchers in economics, geography, sociology, behavioural science, demography and wider social sciences to be recognised for how their work improves lives for a wide range of people both in the UK and in other countries: From how children are taught to read, to innovative tools helping insure Ugandan farmers, or how victims of gender-based violence can experience justice.

Their impacts are impressive and far-reaching and I’m proud that the ESRC has funded this work, and that it can be fully recognised through our Celebrating Impact Prize. Many thanks to all of our applicants for their commitment and hard work, and of course congratulations to this year’s winners and finalists.

Professor Jennifer Rubin
Executive Chair
Economic and Social Research Council
@jenkrubin
About ESRC

The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), part of UK Research and Innovation, is the UK’s largest funder of research on the social and economic questions facing us today, investing £220 million each year in research, infrastructure and training.

We support independent, world-class research designed to advance the frontiers of social science and contribute to a more prosperous economy, more effective public services and a more sustainable, healthy, secure society.

We also work in partnership with researchers and innovators across disciplines, and we are involved in some of the world’s most ambitious research programmes.

The ESRC portfolio covers all 19 social science disciplines, from law and linguistics to economics and social history – giving us a unique understanding of the UK population’s needs and aspirations. This helps us shape public policy and contribute to making the economy more competitive.

About the Celebrating Impact Prize

The annual ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize, now in its eighth year, is an opportunity to recognise and reward researchers whose work has made a real difference to society or the economy.

This year’s prize categories are:
- Outstanding Societal Impact
- Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact
- Outstanding International Impact
- Outstanding Public Policy Impact

A prize of £10,000 is awarded to the winner of each category. Each prize is to be spent on furthering knowledge exchange, public engagement or other communications activities to promote the economic and social impact of the research.

This year the panel also chose to award an additional Panel’s Choice Award to recognise a finalist whose work shows great promise and is expected to reach its full impact in the future.

Additionally, ESRC is recognising Professor Lord Richard Layard with a Lifetime Achievement Award to celebrate the outstanding contribution he has made to social science and society in the UK and beyond.
Outstanding Societal Impact

Justice, inequality and gender-based violence

Research into the impact of gender-based violence on victims-survivors and their experience of justice has led to greater protection for survivors of domestic abuse and their children, new understanding of what victim-survivors of gender-based violence seek in terms of justice, and improved advocacy, training and support by specialist services such as Women’s Aid and Rape Crisis.

Impacts

- Professor Marianne Hester and team’s findings in 2017 directly influenced the revision of guidance for family court judges including the President of the Family Court’s review of Practice Direction 12J (2016), affording victims-survivors and their children better protection from unsafe child contact and further abuse during the court process. Her research also fed into the Government’s landmark 2019 Domestic Abuse Bill that provides a legal definition of domestic abuse and consolidates previous police intervention through domestic abuse protection orders.

- Police commissioners in the north east and south west used the evidence that support from independent domestic and sexual violence advocacy services significantly improves criminal justice outcomes to make the case for funding such specialist independent services.

- The research team’s new ‘Measuring Justice Tool’ helps specialist services such as Rape Crisis and Women’s Aid identify and formally measure the sense of justice victims-survivors gain through the support and validation they receive from domestic and sexual violence advocacy services. This metric is now being used by specialist gender based violence (GBV) support services to better capture the full value and impact of their work, also important in funding applications.

- Findings have informed Women’s Aid national training, delivered to more than 50 practitioners, and training for its Independent Domestic Abuse Advocate qualification. In 2019 Research in Practice commissioned Professor Hester to develop a national social care practitioner training programme, delivered to 159 practitioners including social workers and family court advisors across the UK.

- Many of the 251 victim-survivors interviewed during the research said they benefited greatly from the opportunity to voice and process their experiences, as well as contribute to improved justice outcomes for others.

“\nThe research has transformed our understanding of justice for survivors of domestic abuse, and has been used extensively to influence policy and practice, including the current Domestic Abuse Bill and our national training programme for frontline professionals.”

Sarika Seshadri
Head of Research and Evaluation, Women’s Aid Federation of England
Outstanding Societal Impact

About the research

Today, less than 2% of rape cases reported to the police result in a conviction. And the most vulnerable victims-survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) – often those whose mental health has been damaged by their abuse – are least likely to obtain formal justice.

In her work over the past 20 years with criminal justice data, Professor Marianne Hester has gathered evidence of an increasingly under-resourced and problematic system. “It’s clear that the formal justice system rarely offers victims-survivors of gender-based violence ‘justice’ in the sense of convictions for crimes, rather many are left feeling revictimised by their experience of the system,” Professor Hester says. “Our research pulls together evidence on different justice systems, different forms of abuse and different forms of inequality to really understand how victims-survivors see justice.”

To tackle this complex issue, Professor Hester and her team looked at more than 1,500 victims-survivors’ experiences and perceptions of justice across formal criminal, civil and family justice systems. They looked across all forms of GBV including domestic abuse, sexual violence, forced marriage and ‘honour-based’ violence; and across all types of inequalities such as gender, ethnic minorities and poor mental health as well as different faiths. They analysed police records to follow how domestic abuse and rape cases progress through the criminal justice system, as well as interviews with 251 victims-survivors of GBV.

Hester and colleagues’ findings reveal clear inequalities in the criminal justice system. Convictions are low and even less likely for older victims-survivors, and those with poor mental health. And there are few cases in the criminal justice system involving victims-survivors from Black and ethnic minority groups or lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, transsexual, queer groups.

In the absence of formal justice, many of the victims-survivors interviewed expressed an interest in ‘wider’ forms of justice that can be found outside a courtroom. As Professor Hester explains: “What we found is the pressing need for a victim-focused agenda for gender-based violence where victims are believed, their experiences of abuse are validated, perpetrators are held accountable, and victims-survivors are empowered to get on with their lives and thrive.”

Based on this research, specialist services such as Rape Crisis and Women’s Aid, who focus on support and advocacy for victims-survivors, are now working with their clients to embed this wider, ‘survivor-focused’ view of justice and help them regain the sense of self and worth that the abuser has destroyed.

Further information

Professor Marianne Hester OBE is a Finalist in the Outstanding Societal Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020.

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Centre for Gender Violence Research
http://www.bristol.ac.uk/sps/research/centres/genderviolence/

Gender violence and justice
Rape victims and specialist sexual violence services
http://europepmc.org/article/MED/30111902
What does justice mean to black and minority ethnic (BME) victims/survivors of gender-based violence? DOI: 10.1080/1369183X.2019.1650010
https://doi.org/10.1080/1369183X.2019.1650010
Rape, inequality and the criminal justice system response in England: the importance of age and gender
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1748895819863095

Her research also fed into the Government’s landmark 2019 Domestic Abuse Bill that provides a legal definition of domestic abuse.
Outstanding Societal Impact

Humanity, Hope, Rehabilitation: Changing thinking about women offenders through prison design

Research into the impact of penal architecture on prisoners and prison staff has changed thinking on custodial design and led to investment in more progressive and innovative prisons in the UK, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand.

Impacts

- Professor Yvonne Jewkes’ research has resulted in nine new prisons in England and Wales, the Republic of Ireland, Australia and New Zealand being designed with rehabilitative goals being given at least equal priority to punishment and security objectives.
- Her findings that ‘normalised’ and more humane living spaces encourage rehabilitation and potentially less recidivism underpin 12 prison refurbishment projects in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.
- She has worked closely with the Irish Prison Service (IPS) on a wide-ranging modernisation programme, including the design of the new €71m Limerick women’s prison, due to open in 2020. She guided IPS through every stage of the planning/design process in creating an innovative 50-bed facility, with student accommodation style rooms, better quality furniture, landscaped open spaces, and more child-friendly visitor areas.
- Her work has changed thinking in prison and correction services, ministries of justice and HM Inspectorate of Prisons, prompting the UK Ministry of Justice’s 2019 decision to use toughened glass rather than traditional bars in future prisons in England and Wales: a change that brings improved security within a less punitive environment. Her findings led to the removal of window bars from existing prisons including HMP Hydebank Wood in Northern Ireland and Wheatfield Prison in Dublin.
- Qualitative research carried out across seven years identifies improvements in design that when implemented enhance the behaviour, mental health, and wellbeing of both prisoners and staff.

“It is fair to say that Yvonne’s research and contributions resulted not only in a complete re-think of the concepts for the new women’s prison in Limerick but also brought about a much more innovative and positive approach to prison design and prison purposing.”

Ciarán M. Nevin
Irish Prison Service
Outstanding Societal Impact

About the research

The 117 prisons in England and Wales house some 80,000 prisoners, including 3,250 women. Research by Professor Yvonne Jewkes shows that over a quarter of prisoners (22,000) are currently housed in grim Victorian-era accommodation, and in small, often overcrowded, cells that limit the potential of rehabilitating offenders. Since 2014 Professor Jewkes has worked with prison authorities in the UK and further afield to encourage new thinking about prison spaces and the belief that progressive prison design could lead to a less hostile, more rehabilitative environment that offers a safer and better work environment for prison staff and greater normality for visitors, particularly children. This not only improves the experiences of prison staff, visitors and prisoners but can affect rehabilitation and the likelihood of reoffending.

As part of her research, Professor Jewkes examined all aspects of prison commissioning, procurement, planning and design as well as the impacts of architecture and design on prisoners and prison staff. She also explored two prisons recognised as exemplars of progressive prison design: Halden Prison in Norway and Storstrøm Prison in Denmark, as well as highly progressive but ultimately uncommissioned designs, including for Holmsheidi Prison in Iceland and Haren Prison in Belgium. She has successfully incorporated best practice lessons from this research into normalising prison environments through, for example, larger windows, more green spaces, fixtures and fittings that are domestic rather than institutional in feel, and bright, welcoming rooms for family visits, with the aim of making time in custody more humane.

“The built environment shapes how we think and feel,” she explains. “Architecture and design play an important part in rehabilitation which, over the longer term, will make our society safer through reduced recidivism.” None of her work, she stresses, is about making prisons ‘softer’ or less of a deterrent to criminals. “Normalising prisons and making them less ‘institutional’ is essential if they are to be more than human warehouses that return offenders to society with their lives even more fractured, and their life chances even more reduced, than when they were admitted,” she explains.

Professor Jewkes’ penal philosophy of humanity, hope and rehabilitation has strongly influenced the Irish Prison Service (IPS). In planning the new 50-bed women’s prison in Limerick, she persuaded the IPS senior team to view female offenders as individuals with complex emotional and well as clinical needs, but also considerable potentials and futures. Using Maggie’s Cancer Care Centres as an exemplar, Professor Jewkes encouraged the IPS to think not about an architecture of incarceration but, instead, an ‘architecture of hope’.

Crucially, the hope built into the bright, more homely Limerick women’s prison will benefit offenders, prison staff and visitors alike, Professor Jewkes insists. “It’s important to remember that prisons are working environments too,” she says. “When architects consider the needs of prison staff in their designs, the result is a happier, healthier and better functioning prison as a whole.”

Her findings that ‘normalised’ and more humane living spaces encourage rehabilitation and potentially less recidivism underpin 12 prison refurbishment projects in the UK, Australia and New Zealand.

Further information

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https://prisonarchitecturedesign.com
https://theconversation.com/how-to-build-better-prisons-55174
Outstanding Societal Impact

Professor Alice Sullivan
UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies

Reading for pleasure boosts cognitive development

Research shows reading for pleasure helps children perform significantly better in maths as well as English. This has directly influenced national and international policymakers, literacy organisations and schools to generate, fund and implement reading for pleasure campaigns and initiatives that have benefited the learning of millions of children worldwide.

Impacts

- **Professor Alice Sullivan’s research is reaching millions of children internationally through:**
  - **Schools:** Findings are used in the core text for primary teacher trainees and newly qualified teachers, ‘Becoming an outstanding primary school teacher’; and eight other books aimed at teachers, librarians and parents; and in teaching materials. The study has inspired schools in the UK and beyond to work with parents and libraries to boost the culture of reading for pleasure. New Zealand’s Ministry of Education and National Library highlighted the study in guidance to teachers; and in South Australia, findings support the Premier’s Reading Challenge, encouraging children to read 12 books in a school year.
  - **Literary organisations:** The research has been cited and used in campaigning and programme materials by the Book Trust, Carnegie Trust, The Reader, Reading Agency, Centre for Literacy in Primary Education, UK Literacy Association, Teen Reading Action Campaign; as well as literacy associations in Canada, the US and Hong Kong. Findings support the Book Trust’s shared reading campaign, Time to Read, which, since 2016, has encouraged over 2.2 million UK children to read for fun.
  - **Local authorities and libraries:** Campaigning groups, local authorities and national library associations from Edinburgh to Vancouver have used the evidence to contest cuts to libraries.
  - **The UK government has also recognised the findings. They were noted by Former Secretary of State for Education and Employment David Blunkett shortly before Reading for Pleasure was mandated in the National Curriculum for the first time (2014); and cited in the DfE report ‘Reading: the next steps’ (2015) which recommended government funding to support book clubs, resources for reading, and instructing schools to promote library membership. In 2016 Conservative Education Minister Rt Hon Nick Gibb MP directly referenced Sullivan’s research stating ‘It is difficult to overstate the benefits of instilling a love of reading in a child.’

“This is the first piece of robust, longitudinal evidence to support work in the field of reading for pleasure. Professor Sullivan’s research has completely shifted the narrative in the way the sector talks about reading and the long-term impact of reading for pleasure.”

Dr Carina Spaulding
Research and Evaluation Manager,
The Reading Agency

Annie Spratt/Unsplash
Outstanding Societal Impact

About the research

The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70) is a nationally representative, longitudinal study following the lives of over 17,000 people born in England, Scotland and Wales in a single week in 1970. Dr Alice Sullivan analysed data from this study to explore how reading for pleasure affects cognitive development.

Her ground-breaking finding shows that encouraging a love of reading in childhood reaps significant benefits that extend into later life. Children who read for pleasure aged 10 make more progress in both vocabulary and maths by age 16 than children who rarely read while growing up. “This is true even after taking account of social background,” Professor Sullivan explains. “Having highly educated parents has traditionally been recognised as the largest social predictor of a child’s progress. But we show the combined effect on children’s learning of reading books often, going to the library regularly and reading newspapers, to be four times greater than the advantage children gain from a parent having a degree.”

This powerful message, backed by solid evidence and spread by extensive media coverage, has struck a chord with parents, teachers, libraries, literacy organisations and policymakers worldwide. “People want to promote reading for pleasure and this research has provided the confidence to say that it really does make a difference,” Professor Sullivan points out.

One key message of this research is that schools have enormous potential to close the word gap for children from less advantaged families. But, to do this, investment in school librarians is needed to help young people discover authors they will enjoy as well as in school (and public) libraries to provide access to a wide range of books.

“Libraries are not a luxury but vital, as is ensuring space within the crowded school curriculum for children to read books of their choice,” she says.

Further information

Professor Alice Sullivan is a Finalist in the Outstanding Societal Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020.

The 1970 British Cohort Study is part of the UK’s world-leading series of birth cohort studies, managed by the ESRC-funded UCL Centre for Longitudinal Studies

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Reading for pleasure
Podcast
www.ucl.ac.uk/ioe/news/2020/may/how-longitudinal-data-reveals-benefits-reading-pleasure-rfrw-s01e02

Reading for fun improves children’s brains, study confirms.
www.theguardian.com/books/booksblog/2013/sep/16/reading-improves-childrens-brains
‘Your vocabulary aged 40 depends on how much you read as a teenager’.

The 1970 British Cohort Study (BCS70)
https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/cls-studies/1970-british-cohort-study/
Enhancing the employment of autistic individuals

Only 16% of autistic adults are in full-time employment in the UK, with lost employment detrimental to quality of life for the majority of autistic adults who would like to work, and costing the UK over £9 billion a year. Research into how to improve employment opportunities has changed public perceptions around autism, increased recruitment of autistic people and changed culture and practices in a number of UK and international organisations.

Impacts

- Dr Anna Remington, with Deutsche Bank and Autistica, the leading UK autism research charity, developed an internship for autistic graduates, the first of its kind in the UK. Since the scheme's launch in 2016, 29 graduates have taken part in both the UK and US: 20 of whom are now in employment.
- Her research highlighting the strengths of autistic individuals as well as how to overcome potential workplace challenges has helped the CEOs of UK and international organisations with more than 2 million employees in total to plan more autism-friendly recruitment processes and workplace environments. Some 50 organisations from the finance, IT, transport, law, banking and healthcare sectors have participated in workshops to showcase the Deutsche Bank graduate intern scheme and the application of research to both graduate and non-graduate employment.
- She founded, with Autistica, the Discover Autism Research and Employment (DARE) initiative in 2018 which helps companies take part in research, receive guidance on the support of autistic employees, and benchmark their progress. So far, almost 2,000 people have taken part.
- Her work has raised awareness of autistic individuals’ unique strengths and abilities, reaching almost 2 million people through Twitter, news articles and TV appearances. Her contribution to the Channel 4 programme ‘Are you Autistic?’ alone reached 1.6 million viewers.

“As a result of the study Deutsche Bank now has a better understanding of the experiences of autistic individuals in work and aims to promote employment opportunities for them. The research has made us recognise the strengths associated with autism which could be hugely beneficial for the business.”

Alex Wilson
Group Head IBOR Transition, Deutsche Bank
About the research

Around 700,000 individuals in the UK may be autistic, or more than 1 in 100 in the population. Only 32% of autistic individuals find any type of paid work in the UK compared to 46% of those with other conditions. Yet almost 80% of autistic adults without jobs want to work.

Historically autism has been considered a disorder and viewed in terms of deficits and disabilities. Challenging this perception, Dr Anna Remington’s studies of how well both autistic and non-autistic people perform various computer-based cognitive tasks revealed that being on the autistic spectrum is a source of many strengths and abilities – particularly, but not exclusively, with respect to attention and perception.

“We found that autistic people can process more information than non-autistic people at any given time,” she says. “This means in many situations autistic people perform better than their non-autistic colleagues.” Indeed, international IT consultancy Auticon actively employs adults on the autism spectrum as IT consultants because of the skills they bring to the work.

Over the past 10 years, Dr Remington has increased understanding of the huge advantage neurodiversity brings to organisations and the meaningful contributions that autistic people can make in the workplace. She has increased awareness of autism through extensive media engagement and helped organisations tackle some of the real challenges and barriers that autistic people encounter when trying to obtain and maintain employment.

Recruitment processes, for example, can unwittingly place autistic job-seekers at a disadvantage. Face-to-face interviews and group assessment activities place heavy weighting on social skills and interaction in an anxiety-spiking environment. Dr Remington’s research shows that offering autistic people work trials to see how well someone can actually do a job or sending interview questions in advance to allow more time for processing could help level the field.

“Adopting more inclusive workplace policies, as Deutsche Bank has done as part of its innovative graduate internship scheme, will enable more autistic and neurodiverse people to thrive in the workplace,” Dr Remington explains. As Adam Livesey, Deutsche Bank employee and former intern points out: “I don’t work well in an over-stimulating environment. Noise-cancelling headphones, a desk positioned away from traffic routes, natural light, and work hours that allow me to avoid a rush hour commute are all examples of adjustments made by Deutsche Bank that accommodate myself and people like me while enabling Deutsche to tap into new, diverse and underemployed talent.”

Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact

Further information

Dr Anna Remington is a Finalist in the Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020

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Sometimes you just need someone to take a chance on you

The Centre for Research in Autism and Education
http://crae.ioe.ac.uk

Discover Autism Research and Employment (DARE)
https://dareuk.org/

Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact

Insuring previously uninsurable poor farmers in Uganda

Research into how Uganda’s three million smallholder farmers perceive risk led to the development of a new drought insurance scheme, subsidised by the Ugandan government. The scheme now protects more than 225,000 smallholder farmers against the risks to their livelihoods posed by drought, pests and poor quality seed, and boosts productivity by providing smallholders with the confidence to invest in their farms.

Impacts

- The research findings led the Government of Uganda to change its agricultural sector strategy and, in 2016, establish the Uganda Agriculture Insurance Scheme (UAIS) providing subsidised insurance together ('bundled') with other products (such as good quality seed) and services (eg, loans) to promote agricultural investment.
- Based on the research, The Agro Consortium, a new private sector organisation of 11 insurance companies in Uganda, introduced a range of new products designed to better meet farmers’ needs. Demand for this ‘bundled’ insurance has since grown rapidly: from 25,000 policies sold in 2017 to more than 225,000 policies in 2020.
- The confidence provided by the new insurance scheme has led smallholders to increase investment in seeds, tools and labour: newly insured Ugandan smallholders with one acre of land increase investment by 60-70% and by 100% for those with five acres or more.
- The research team worked with partner m-Omulimisa to develop insurance in a beneficial and appealing way to farmers via the use of innovative mobile phone technology in the hands of local people which enables easy sign-up and quick, no-fuss insurance pay-outs.

“From my perspective, [the new] agriculture insurance is beneficial to us farmers because it enables us to borrow money from financial institutions and invest in farming without worrying. When you borrow money to invest in farming and there is a drought, you lose twice; you lose the crops, and you have to sell one of your assets to pay the money you borrowed. But if you have agriculture insurance, it will pay the money you borrowed.”

George Shangi, Farmer
Bulambuli district, Bwikhonge sub county, Bunamwamba village

Professor Arjan Verschoor
University of East Anglia

Professor Ben D’Exelle
University of East Anglia
About the research

Research by Professor Arjan Verschoor and Professor Ben D’Exelle explored how smallholder farmers in eastern Uganda perceived financial risks, and whether this influenced decisions to invest in productivity-boosting technologies such as fertiliser, seeds and irrigation.

Building on over two decades of systematic and sustained grassroots research among 3,000 local farmers, as well as farmer organisations, agricultural service providers and district agricultural officials, the research team found that existing insurance which paid out only after a drought had occurred, and often failed to pay out at all, was unpopular.

“In eastern Uganda there is a chance of drought once in every six years as well as risks from erratic rainfall, locust attacks and counterfeit seed,” Professor Verschoor points out.

“Smallholder farmers who take out a loan to improve their farm are playing Russian Roulette with a one in six chance that they can’t pay back the loan and will lose their land and their livelihood. Until recently farmers did not trust insurance to cover those risks, trapping them in poverty due to under-investment leading to low agricultural productivity and, ultimately, food insecurity.”

To solve this impasse, the research team worked locally and nationally with Ministry of Agriculture officials, insurance companies, banks, and international development agencies to devise a workable risk management solution. The researchers proposed using satellite images in providing insurance against drought and erratic rainfall offered together with certified seed and pesticides to take care of the risks posed by fake or damaged seed as well as pests. By offering this insurance combined with a loan, all the major risk factors were covered enabling smallholder farmers to invest on a larger scale.

“Supported by government subsidy, this agricultural insurance scheme is now highly attractive to farmers,” explains Professor Ben D’Exelle. A typical smallholder farmer with one acre of land earns on average £100 a year from selling about 10 bags of maize. Now, potential loss can be covered by a premium of just £5, with rapid payment based on satellite identification of inadequate growing conditions. One further attraction of the scheme is that farmers no longer need to rely on their neighbours for support if ill fortune occurs: fear of exposing other farmers to risk had previously been a factor holding back investment.

More than 1.5 billion people in the developing world live in poor smallholder farming households fearful of uninsured risk. “Our research shows how insurance can be designed to help farmers better cope with risk, so that they can confidently invest in their farms, increase productivity and help bring about food security,” says Professor Verschoor.

Lessons from this research are transferable on a global scale. “What we discovered is that insurance needs are highly contextualised,” Professor Verschoor explains. “Risk factors vary from place to place. But, with a deep understanding of local risks, we have a model that could be adapted to offer insurance packages that lead to increased smallholder investment and a safe route out of poverty in other developing countries around the world.”

Further information

Professor Arjan Verschoor and Professor Ben D’Exelle are Finalists in the Outstanding Business and Enterprise Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020.

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Supporting agricultural investment in Uganda

DEGRP policy brief on Uganda agriculture

Risk aversion among small farmers in Uganda

Newly insured Ugandan smallholders with one acre of land increase investment by 60-70% and by 100% for those with five acres or more.
(2020) stated that approaches advocated by the research had a positive effect on reading ‘similar to reducing class sizes by one third’.

International strategy: The findings underpin the World Bank’s new goal of halving global illiteracy by 2030 outlined in its 2019 10-year Ending Learning Poverty strategy. Professor Kathy Rastle has advised on research-based, structured lessons plans for teachers being developed initially in Mozambique and Angola then for use in classrooms across the developing world.

Professor Kathy Rastle
Royal Holloway, University of London

Professor Kate Nation
University of Oxford

Professor Anne Castles
Macquarie University

Ending the Reading Wars

Research outlining the science behind how children learn to read is transforming the way reading is taught in classrooms around the world and helping potentially millions of children improve their life chances through better literacy skills.

Impacts

Research drawing together 30 years of scientific study has resulted in concrete recommendations for how to teach reading. This research has countered ideology-based positions on how children learn to read, and is transforming policy and practice among key literacy stakeholders:

Teacher training. The evidence is transforming teacher practice globally through local networks of teachers teaching their peers (eg, The Research Schools Network), and through major educational leadership organisations involved in teacher training. Professor Anne Castles advised Deans for Impact, a US-based organisation working to infuse learning science into teacher education, and that works with 60 teacher training programmes reaching thousands of teachers each year.

Reading professionals: The research team’s ground-breaking article Ending the Reading Wars, provided an evidence-based framework for communicating reading science reaching over 4 million people worldwide, including 12 major educational leadership organisations – the ASCD (113,000 members in 19 countries), the Thomas B. Fordham Institute (USA), ResearchEd (UK), the Reading League (USA); as well as parent advocacy groups including MomsRising (1 million members); dyslexia charities; and the major educational publishers.

National policymakers: Findings underpin the introduction in 2020 of state-wide phonics screening in New South Wales, Australia; and they were cited in the Literacy Strategic Plan for Massachusetts, and in the Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) Improving Literacy in Secondary Schools guidance. Professor Kate Nation advised the UK All Party Parliamentary Group on Literacy. The government’s UK Research and Development Roadmap (2020) stated that approaches advocated by the research had a positive effect on reading ‘similar to reducing class sizes by one third’.

The research of Castles et al is having profound impact where it matters most — on the practice of teachers responsible for fostering child literacy. We know, scientifically, how to help students learn to read — they have made an unparalleled contribution to ensuring this knowledge is applied for generations to come.”

Benjamin Riley
Founder and CEO, Deans for Impact USA
Outstanding International Impact

About the research

In some low-income countries more than half of children leave school with poor reading skills: even in high-income countries 15-20% of school leavers struggle to read well. Speaking comes naturally to the vast majority of children but reading does not. Children must be taught how to read and debate has raged for decades over how best to teach reading.

Research by Professors Kathy Rastle, Kate Nation and Anne Castles has unpicked the science and cognitive processes behind skilled reading and turned that knowledge into concrete recommendations for use by teachers worldwide. Their synthesis of evidence from more than 300 research studies was published two years ago in a highly influential article, Ending the Reading Wars.

Based on scientific evidence gathered over 15 years, the research team propose a balanced approach to reading instruction, underpinned by a deep understanding of how reading develops. "By balanced we don't just mean a bit of every approach thrown together," Professor Rastle points out. Rather, research indicates that reading requires three sets of skills: learning how to crack the alphabetic code, becoming fluent at recognising words, and understanding written text. To crack the alphabetic code, children need instruction in the link between letters and sounds (phonics). This provides the necessary foundation on which to build the other vital skills of fluent word reading and text comprehension. Mastery of all three skills enables a child to read well.

"Our Ending the Reading Wars article is important because it has influenced people across the entire literacy ecosystem," Professor Rastle explains. "A change this fundamental in the way reading education is delivered – and which potentially affects every child in the world – requires everyone involved to be talking about the science of reading and how it can be used to improve outcomes for children. Today, educational leadership organisations, publishers, policymakers, teachers and parents are talking about the science of reading, and using it to transform literacy policy and practice around the world."

Further information

Professor Kathy Rastle (Royal Holloway, University of London), Professor Kate Nation, (University of Oxford) and Professor Anne Castles (Macquarie University, Australia) are Finalists in the Outstanding International Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020.

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Ending the reading wars
https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/1529100618772271

Ceasefire in the reading wars
https://www.tes.com/magazine/article/ceasefire-reading-wars

Hard words: why American kids aren’t being taught to read

Speaking comes naturally to the vast majority of children but reading does not. Children must be taught how to read and debate has raged for decades over how best to teach reading.
Outstanding Public Policy Impact

Improving data: Strengthening the evidence base for policy

The ESRC Centre for Population Change, through collaboration with the Office for National Statistics, has improved the accuracy of current and future population estimates for the UK, providing policymakers, planners and business with better evidence on which to build policy and plan public services, as well as accurate data for business decisions.

Impacts

- The ESRC Centre for Population Change (CPC) has worked with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) over the last decade to develop better measures of the three drivers of population change – fertility, mortality and migration – improving the evidence base for UK national and local policy on issues which affect us all.
- CPC has informed population-relevant discussions at more than 90 events with civil servants and policymakers in government and local authorities.
- CPC’s methodological improvements to population projections are used in all aspects of policy planning:
  - **Early life:** Improved fertility estimation has provided local authorities with better means to predict demand for and delivery of key services such as nursery and early years learning, schools and maternity services.
  - **Pensions and insurance:** New methodology for estimating life expectancy at older ages has informed the way pension, life and health insurance products are priced and helped people better plan their pension and care needs.
  - **Student migration:** Post-study work visas for international students were reintroduced following a CPC, ONS and Universities UK collaboration that helped to revise inaccurate figures on international student out-migration. Research showed that 95% of foreign students who intended to leave the country after graduation had left the UK six months later.
  - **COVID-19:** CPC is developing more effective estimates of excess mortality due to COVID-19, taking account of changing population structures and long-term trends in mortality. More accurate estimation is crucial in determining the effect of the present pandemic and its differing impacts within the population and CPC is working closely with ONS to ensure the methods are applied.
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About the research

The Centre for Population Change (CPC), launched in 2009, is the UK’s first research centre to focus on understanding what drives population change and its implications for society.

“Understanding our population – how many people there are, their ages, where they live, who they live with and how they are likely to behave – is critical to government and to business,” explains CPC Director, Professor Jane Falkingham.

Over the last decade more than 50 CPC researchers and PhD students from around the world have helped improve the measurement of the drivers of demographic change, resulting in more accurate population projections and statistics to support policy, planning and business decisions. Their research also explores what demographic change means for society and people living in it. For example, CPC research looks at impacts of policy on some of the country’s most vulnerable groups; their work forecasts that the number of unpaid carers in the UK will rise from 7 million to over 10 million by 2050. “Highlighting the growing importance of unpaid carers and their role in supporting older people to remain living independently in the community helps draw attention to the need for appropriate employer and policymaker responses,” says Professor Falkingham.

CPC’s innovative statistical modelling techniques and new methodologies have remedied inaccuracies and shortcomings in existing data that can hamper decision-making. CPC helped develop, for example, new fertility projection techniques to ensure that local authorities can avoid, as has happened in the past, wrongly forecasting the number of school places required and resources required.

From its outset CPC worked closely with the Office for National Statistics (ONS) to ensure it addressed the most relevant policy topics. The strong relationship between CPC and ONS has been built through open exchange, shared goals and mutual trust in the quality and accuracy of both organisations’ work, allowing co-production of research on issues of policy concern. As a result, recent research has focused quickly on the complex problems posed by COVID-19, offering timely evidence on issues as wide-ranging as COVID-19’s impact on existing socio-economic inequalities to the positive benefits of lockdown for parent-child relationships.

“The ESRC Centre for Population Change is dedicated to improving the core demographic data, and its analysis, which form part of our national statistics. Without this rigorous assessment and methodological progress, we don’t have accuracy. And without accuracy, we are unable to efficiently plan for the future and govern effectively. I have no doubt that the work of CPC has had an impact on policymaking in the UK; it has improved the measurement of fertility, mortality and migration, enhanced statistical methods and accuracy, and it continues to provide vital socioeconomic evidence that will help our society to progress.”

Professor Sir Ian Diamond
UK’s National Statistician, Head of the Government Statistical Service and the Government Analysis Function, and Chief Executive of the UK Statistics Authority Board

Further information

Professor Jane Falkingham and her colleagues from the Centre for Population Change are Finalists in the Outstanding Public Policy Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020.

The Centre for Population Change is funded by the ESRC and is a partnership between the Universities of Southampton, St Andrews, and Stirling, in collaboration with the Office for National Statistics and the National Records of Scotland.

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Adolescent mental health: improving young people’s lives using evidence from national cohort data

An estimated 16% of all 14-year-olds in the UK in 2015 suffered from mental ill-health. Research which identified the scale of mental ill-health among the UK’s adolescents, and studied its drivers, has focused national attention on the problem, prompting new government policy and strategies for improving young people’s mental health.

Impacts

- Professor Emla Fitzsimons and Dr Praveetha Patalay’s research provided the first data on the state of young people’s mental health in the UK in over 10 years. This stark evidence, released just prior to the 2017 Government Green Paper, ‘Transforming Children and Young People’s Mental Health Provision’ in December 2017, helped to refocus national health policy on tackling the high levels of mental ill-health among the UK’s youth.

- Findings influenced Public Health England (PHE)’s five-year public mental health strategy, by widening its focus from children and young people who access mental health services to include the mental wellbeing of all children, and the risk and protective factors associated with both child mental illness and mental wellbeing.

- The Department for Education (DfE) used the findings to frame discussion on young people’s mental health and school-based interventions. Research also informed the Department of Health and Social Care’s Prevention Green Paper ‘Advancing our health: prevention in the 2020s’, and its call for urgent action to tackle the broad range of risk and protective factors associated with mental health.

- The research team created an easy-to-understand infographic that provides a conceptual framework for how to approach children’s mental health in schools and in the community. The infographic was used in meetings with ministers and senior civil servants, cited by PHE as ‘pivotal in guiding its thinking’, and informed DfE, local government and child mental health training programmes.

“The research has enabled Public Health England and other policymakers to clearly communicate the case for a whole system response to children and young people’s mental health, including a focus on prevention and efforts to improve population wellbeing as much as service provision for children and young people living with mental health problems.”

Claire Robson
Programme Manager, Children, Young People and Families, Public Health England
Outstanding Public Policy Impact

About the research

Professor Emla Fitzsimons and Dr Praveetha Patalay used data from the Millennium Cohort Study (MCS), an ESRC-funded longitudinal dataset following the lives of 19,000 people born in 2000-2002, to gauge the state of adolescent mental health in the UK. Their study shows that almost one in four 14-year-old girls and one in ten boys of the same age experience more severe symptoms of depression. As the MCS is representative of all individuals born in the UK at the turn of the millennium, this translates to around 166,000 girls and 67,000 boys who were aged 14 at the time of the survey.

Teenage mental ill-health in the UK is a worsening problem. When researchers compared depressive symptoms among 14-year-olds in 2005 with those in 2015 they found that those with high levels of symptoms had almost doubled over this 10-year period.

An estimated 16% of all 14-year-olds in the UK in 2015 suffered from mental ill-health.

Their research not only highlighted the alarming scale of mental illness among young people but also drew attention to an overlooked distinction between mental wellbeing or life satisfaction and mental ill-health. “We find that absence of mental health difficulties is not equivalent to good mental wellbeing,” Professor Fitzsimons says. “Moreover, we find distinct factors associated with child mental illness on the one hand and mental wellbeing on the other, as well as factors that are common to both outcomes.”

The research team identified several risk and protective factors for mental health ranging from being bullied by peers to not feeling safe in one’s neighbourhood, and organised them in four basic groups: individual characteristics; family, relationships and home life; socio-economic circumstances, and the wider school and neighbourhood environment. It was this characterisation of factors into the different spheres of young people’s lives that proved so useful for policymakers, as it very clearly highlighted opportunities for action.

As at least half of all people who have mental illness in adulthood have symptoms by the age of 14, the research indicated the pressing need for early intervention both to identify mental illness and promote positive wellbeing. These findings underpin new government initiatives to identify children most at risk, provide greater support and make discussion of mental health and wellbeing a regular part of young people’s lives.

“Young people’s mental health had been on the side lines of health research for far too long, despite its large impacts on individuals’ lives and society as a whole,” says Dr Praveetha Patalay. “Longitudinal studies that track people over time are essential to provide policymakers, schools and the public with robust evidence that can help improve long-term outcomes for young people.”

Further information

Professor Emla Fitzsimons and Dr Praveetha Patalay are Finalists in the Outstanding Public Policy Impact category in the ESRC Celebrating Impact Prize 2020

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Extent of mental health difficulties at age 14

Child mental illness and wellbeing infographic

Millennium Cohort Study
https://cls.ucl.ac.uk/cls-studies/millennium-cohort-study/

Risk and protective factors for mental ill-health and wellbeing

Development and predictors of mental ill-health and wellbeing from childhood to adolescence
At the age of 86, Professor Lord Richard Layard’s CV is as diverse as it is long. The impact of his work can be seen in education, employment, mental health and even climate change; his influence felt in academic research, public policy, community engagement, and across the political spectrum. But there is a single thread that weaves through this varied career: a mission to create a happier society.

It’s evident, of course, in the five influential publications on happiness he’s written over the past two decades but also in the motivation behind much of his earlier work, from the Robbins Committee that gave greater access to higher education in the 1960s to his influential ‘welfare-to-work’ recommendations designed to reduce unemployment in the 1980s and 90s.

“I like to think my purpose has always been to make the world a better place,” says Layard. “I felt that in my first job as a teacher, and it has ultimately been the question behind all the policy work I have done – what can we change to make people happier?”

**Economics for a purpose**

For Layard, the purpose of economics lies in its 18th-century roots, when it was founded in order to discover which institutions would produce the greatest happiness for the people. This drive to use economic arguments to create a happier society has characterised his career.

“For many economists, success is measured by articles in prestigious theoretical journals but, for Richard, economics should be used for a purpose. He looks at the big problems facing society and tries to find a solution by identifying the one thing that will make the biggest difference,” says Lord Gus O’Donnell who, as former Cabinet Secretary and head of the civil service and UK Treasury, has worked on crafting policy with Layard. “He’s also very good at making

**Impact at a glance**

- Senior research officer to Robbins Committee on Higher Education, which opened the way for mass higher education in Britain
- Labour economist, ‘welfare to work’ proposals adopted under Labour’s New Deal and several European countries
- Founder-director of the high-impact ESRC Centre for Economic Performance at LSE; current programme Co-Director (Wellbeing)
- Life peer in the House of Lords
- Key figure in happiness economics, wrote *Happiness: Lessons from a New Science*, plus four other books influential in both the academic field and to the wider public
- Made the successful case for Improving Access to Psychological Therapies to expand mental health treatment, which now treats more than 600,000 patients a year
- Co-editor of annual World Happiness Report; encouraged David Cameron’s Conservative government to introduce national wellbeing measurement by the Office for National Statistics
- Co-founder of Action for Happiness, a campaign committed to creating a happier, more caring, society – more than 200,000 people have taken its ‘happiness pledge’
complicated ideas and economics sound simple. He can explain things in a way that allows ministers to see advantages, not just from an economic point of view but from a political-economy angle, too.”

It is an approach evidenced with the launch of Improving Access to Psychological Therapies (IAPT) in 2008, a service that now gives a course of treatment to more than 600,000 patients a year. “Mental ill-health causes more unhappiness than physical illness, poverty or unemployment, yet at that time we were doing far too little to help people who are mentally ill,” says Layard who, together with leading clinical psychologist Professor David Clark, made the case to government for a nationwide service offering psychological therapies and training of the therapists to implement them.

While Clark provided evidence of the efficacy of the treatments, Layard’s economic argument was key to securing the funding. “Put simply, IAPT wouldn’t have happened without him,” says Clark. “I had been trying to persuade the NHS to make these treatments more widely available for a long time, but Richard combined the clinical evidence with a very detailed cost-benefit analysis to show the service could save more money than it cost. His ability to bring together clinical academics, economists and patient representatives, and mount a clear, well-supported argument, was critical.”

**Bringing together perspectives**

Collaboration is important to Layard, and bringing together insights from different disciplines has been fundamental to his philosophy throughout his career. Nowhere is this more evident than at the Centre for Economic Performance (CEP), the ESRC-funded leading economic research group he founded at the London School of Economics (LSE).

“I’m most proud. The good, honest, policy-relevant research it does is crucial for society,” says Layard, who initially set up a small centre at the LSE in the 1970s which became the ESRC-funded Centre for Labour Economics in the 1980s, before developing into the interdisciplinary CEP in 1990. It is now recognised as a global centre of excellence and has been granted official ESRC Research Institute status (one of only two in the country, alongside the Institute for Fiscal Studies).

“The CEP is a triumph of an ESRC interdisciplinary initiative. Since the start, everyone who has worked here has understood that social science should be eclectic, and that no discipline should be a set of true believers,” he says. “I used to make a speech every year when new people joined where I said our aim was not to show how clever we are, but to try to better understand the world. This matters now more than ever.”

Back in the 1980s, when European governments were at a loss to explain high levels of both unemployment and inflation, Layard and a small group at the LSE were determined to understand what was going on. “I spent 10 years researching this issue, and in many ways it was the most satisfying experience of my working life,” says Layard who, alongside economists Stephen Nickell and Richard Jackman, advocated the active labour market policies which became the basis of the ‘Welfare to Work’ approach in a number of European countries, and of Labour’s ‘New Deal’ in 1997.

Layard believes they are just as relevant today. “We are already seeing the effects of COVID on jobs. Long-term unemployment is not just bad for public finances, it makes people feel worthless and unwanted, too. It’s vital we have a job guarantee system where people who have been unemployed for a year are only supported through work.”

**Measuring happiness**

While economics has a long history of valuing happiness, the ability to measure and study the impact of something so subjective has been central to Layard’s work at the CEP – and key to transforming the research area from what some perceived as a ‘speculative idea’ to a branch of empirical economics gaining increasing traction not just within academic circles but with governments around the world.

Layard’s interest was ignited after the new science of happiness began to develop in the late 1980s. “It showed among other things that the subjective experience of happiness corresponded to what could be measured in the brain. This meant you could get meaningful insights from life-satisfaction questions – and economists could then use these data to help explain the variation of happiness between different people and countries.”

Layard has been a key figure in using this data to better understand the impact of happiness on a population, and how it can be used to improve decision making, culminating in the creation of the World Happiness Report in 2012. Alongside economists Jeffrey Sachs and John Helliwell, he created a report that leverages Gallup data to analyse and rank the wellbeing of different populations around the globe.
Downloaded more than a million times each year, it has, says current co-editor Professor Jan-Emmanuel De Neve, University of Oxford, made many governments think beyond gross domestic product. “Governments are taking wellbeing measurements increasingly seriously, with a number of them using the report as a key performance indicator,” explains De Neve. “But it’s not just about ranking; it’s made the policy debate much more sophisticated and nuanced, incorporating different aspects of wellbeing, such as migration and equality. It has also been used by other people who prefer multidimensional indices – the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development uses it as one of its measures. By making that bridge from academic insight to influencing public policy, Richard has undoubtedly been a driving force in putting happiness on the global policy agenda.”

Layard lauds New Zealand, Scotland and Iceland for adopting wellbeing as their targets, and says what he really wants is for all public policy to be directed towards the goal of happiness. It is an opinion that has come into sharp relief with COVID-19. In a recent report, he argues the only way to balance the seemingly incommensurable economic, social, physical and psychological impacts of the pandemic is to find a “common currency”. “In this post-religious age, I think we are lacking a clear, simple, moral purpose,” he explains. “Action for Happiness offers a set of secular ethics – that each of us should try to create the most happiness we can in the world and the least misery.”

More than 200,000 people have taken the Action for Happiness ‘pledge’, it has an online community of over 1m, and weekly meetings take place across the UK. Like all of Layard’s projects, Action for Happiness is backed by evidence-based research. The eight-session ‘Exploring What Matters’ course was subject to a randomised control trial which found that those who attended ended up a whole point higher in life-satisfaction than those who had not taken the course – that’s bigger than the jump in score for someone offered a job after being unemployed. “Action for Happiness really shows the breadth of Richard’s ambition and passion to make a difference to the wellbeing of society,” says its director, Dr Mark Williamson. “Prior to Richard, the happiness movement was considered by many as something a bit woolly, but Action for Happiness presents a radical, whole-societal view that’s grounded in evidence and rationality.”

Grass roots change
Layard was just 17 when he first announced that he wanted to be a social reformer, but he still believes real and sustainable change must come from the bottom up as well as top down – with interventions at national policy level, but also giving people the tools for grass roots change. For this reason, in 2011, he co-launched Action for Happiness, a campaign with the aim of creating the community building blocks for a happier society.

“A wellbeing legacy
What about his own happiness? “Well, I enjoy playing tennis every week and have a rule to never work in the evening. And nothing makes me happier than being on holiday with my wife, Molly – that’s my idea of perfection. But does my happiness fluctuate? Yes, of course.

“This wellbeing movement is incredibly important and, although we’ve made huge advances, I’m conscious there’s still only a tiny minority of us who think like this. I know one shouldn’t feel impatient about progress, but sometimes I do.”

Just as happiness has been woven through his own work over the decades, Layard believes it should be the foundation for future research, too. “We are facing some of the most challenging decisions of our times. How can we even begin to think about them without using some common metric? Wellbeing research can show us the causes of happiness and misery – and how we can best promote the happiness of society. Why wouldn’t we want to know more?”

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Alison Park
Professor Alison Park is Director of Research, and joined ESRC in January 2019. Prior to joining ESRC she was the Director of CLOSER (Cohort and Longitudinal Studies Enhancement Resources), a significant ESRC-funded collaboration based at UCL Institute of Education. CLOSER brings together eight leading UK longitudinal studies, the British Library and the UK Data Service to maximise the use, value and impact of longitudinal studies. It does this by stimulating longitudinal research, developing and sharing resources, and providing training.

Prior to joining UCL, Alison led a research team at NatCen Social Research which carried out a range of government and academic studies, both qualitative and quantitative, including Understanding Society, the British Social Attitudes Survey and the UK arm of the European Social Survey.

Alison was awarded a CBE for services to social sciences in the 2018 New Year Honours, and is a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

John Young
John joined INASP as Executive Director in November 2018. He previously spent 17 years developing and leading the Research and Policy in Development (RAPID) programme at the Overseas Development Institute (ODI) and, prior to that, nearly 20 years based in Sri Lanka, Kenya and Indonesia developing, implementing and testing new approaches to rural development and decentralised public services. Since returning to the UK, he has undertaken research, evaluations and other assignments in more than 20 developing and emerging countries. He has also advised international NGOs and bilateral and multilateral development organisations on a wide range of topics including research-policy linkages; policy engagement and influence; organisational and institutional development, capacity development, especially of think tanks and think tank-like organisations; government service reform; monitoring evaluation and learning; and strategic communication.

Irene Hardill
Irene Hardill is Professor Public Policy, Northumbria University. Her current research explores the role of unpaid work in the home and in the community, and is supported by an ESRC project, Discourses of Voluntary Action at two ‘Transformational Moments’ of the Welfare State, the 1940s and 2010s (ES/N018249/1) which is nearing completion and a British Academy Infrastructure project led by Dr Georgina Brewis on Digitising Voluntary and Community Sector Archives. She has also just started a UKRI COVID-19 study, Mobilising Voluntary Action in the four UK jurisdictions: Learning from today, prepared for tomorrow, which she is leading. She is a member of the ESRC COVID-19 Commissioning Panel, the Research Advisory Group of NCVO and a Fellow of the Academy of Social Sciences.

Dr Grant Hill-Cawthorne
Dr Grant Hill-Cawthorne is a medical microbiologist and the Head of the Parliamentary Office of Science and Technology (POST). After completing medicine and medical training at the University of Cambridge he went to Saudi Arabia to set up a laboratory specialising in pathogen genomics, where he completed his PhD on the use of genomics for public health microbiology. In 2011–2012 he was an NHS Medical Director’s Clinical Fellow and the Clinical Adviser to the Deputy Chief Executive of NICE. From 2013–2018, Grant was the Senior Lecturer in Communicable Diseases Epidemiology at the School of Public Health, University of Sydney. Since May 2018, Grant has headed POST, the science advice unit within the UK Parliament that bridges research and policy (https://post.parliament.uk). Grant continues as an adjunct Associate Professor in Global Health at the University of Sydney.

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