

MINUTES

ADVISORY GROUP: NAVIGATING THE PUBLIC INFORMATION RIGHTS ECOLOGY

Date: Wednesday 7th February 2018

Time: 11:00-13:00

Venue: G031 University College London

Present:

Afshan Ahmed - Rees: The Care Leaver's Foundation

Darren Coyne – The Care Leaver's Association

Julia Feast OBE – Independent consultant on specializing in the life-long issues of being adopted, in care or donor-conceived, formerly CoramBAAF

Andrew Flinn – UCL (Project CI)

Jenny Haynes – Wellcome

Victoria Hoyle – UCL (Project Research Associate)

Julia Jones – Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

Elizabeth Lomas – UCL (Project CI; minute taker)

Madi McAllister – Church of England

Anna Sexton – The National Archives

Elizabeth Shepherd – UCL (Project PI, Chair)

Malcolm Todd – The National Archives

Amy Woodworth – Become

Ben Worthy – Department of Politics, Birkbeck, University of London

1.0 Introductions and apologies for absence

Apologies were received from Georgina Brewis (Institute of Education, UCL), Peter Garsden (Association for Child Abuse Lawyers), Susan Healy, Joanne Evans (Monash University, Australia), Cascia Davies (Attachment-based psychotherapist/social worker) and Luke Geoghegan (British Association of Social Workers).

2.0 Role and structure of the Advisory Group

2.1 Roles

ES explained the wider research structures and more formal aspects of the role of the Advisory Group. The Group discussed how best to make use of the range of expertise within the Advisory Group. The need to share information and develop work together was discussed. VH will look at setting up a shared work space. She will look at GoogleDocs. She will consider which sets of documentation can be branded (including noting where things are drafts) and safely shared. The proviso would be that the information must not be shared beyond the group too soon as this might lead to diminished impact or misinterpreted information. Information sent externally needs clear messaging and direction.

Action: All

VH will look at setting up a shared work space. She will look at GoogleDocs. She will consider what can be branded and safely shared. All will review and comment on the documentation adding information to build a more holistic picture.

2.2 Outcomes

A range of potential outcomes were discussed including:

- Policy and legislative change that produces guidance but where possible provides mandatory requirements for recordkeeping. The requirements need to offer rights and support to all children and adults regardless of the legal status as care leavers. Currently there have been inconsistencies in the law and treatment of 'care leavers'.
- Clearer access regimes and support for those accessing records to ensure they understand what to expect upon receipt. This includes being clear that the record can be a subjective perspective from a moment in time with which the recipient may disagree. Potentially access systems which flag 'care leavers' may enable the better provision of bespoke access services from the outset.
- Better recordkeeping which provides for the memory and voice of children and notes positive experience. Where there have been negative events recorded then it would aid the context to better understand the record if it includes the rationale for the decision making.
- The development of a recordkeeping pack for care leavers.
- Training on recordkeeping within social worker education as a key part of the curriculum.
- Case studies of good recordkeeping and access, with costed examples around this provision.
- Record retention schedules and preservation strategies for records through time.
- Factsheets and training for those who support information provision and care leavers from a range of contexts.
- A list of the places where records are held and the kinds of information found within the records at different dates in time. In addition, a portal providing access to this information would be a further benefit as in the Australian model 'Find and Connect'. It was noted that this was an ambitious proposal. In the current project it may be that a scope for this work could be drawn up to then review the possibility of delivering this in a further project.
- Wider dissemination through conferences, papers and less formal networks. EL will be talking to IRMS and will mention the work. MM will be there to support. VH will identify further conference, paper and dissemination opportunities.

Action: All

All will continue to comment on and review opportunities for outcomes which will develop this work.

Action: EL, MM and VH

EL will be talking to IRMS and will mention the work. MM will be there to support. VH will identify further opportunities for conferences, papers and wider dissemination.

2.3 Networks

The network diagram VH had produced was reviewed. Further diagram networks were noted as:

- Charities and Voluntary Groups
- Legal structures, law and order
- Local Authority, Government and other key policy areas.
- Policy makers
- Related research
- Advisors for Care Leavers
- Campaign Groups
- Inquiries

VH will set up some new network diagrams, e.g. for research.

VH requested any relevant information on events, newsletters, mailings, subscriptions be sent through. VH noted she was attending an All-Parliamentary Group for Looked After Children and Care Leavers' event on improving the mental health and emotional wellbeing of children in care.

All agreed to continue to build the network diagram as this will help develop links to understand the network and the avenues for the advocacy case. All will review and email VH any contacts and gaps to expand diagrams to ensure that it is a live and relevant document. In addition, they will send related information on events and newsletters.

Action: All

All to review and extend the network diagram as well as sending related information on events and newsletters.

2.4 Project name

The research name was discussed – MIRRA. This stands for name Memory, Identity, Rights in Records and Access (MIRRA). All liked this and felt it to be highly appropriate. EL will set up the Group blog.

Action: VH and EL

VH will brand materials accordingly. EL will set up the Group blog.

3.0 Research data collection and Participatory Research Group

VH reported since the original project design there have been some amendments to take account of the important participatory aspects. She explained the planned workshops and the participatory approach and Group that has been established. The Participatory Group will meet at intervals throughout to oversee progress. Individuals from the Group will contribute their own experiences which is a new dimension -so that it will have care leaver led perspectives. This has set out the shape of the project and now VH will start the data collection. There will be 4 groups who will provide the focus for data collection. The first group will be engaged with through workshops. The second and third groups will be approached through interviews. The requirements for the fourth group will be reviewed. The four groups include:

- Care leavers,
- Social work practitioners to include residential care,

- Data protection practitioners,
- Academic researchers.

FOI requests have been made by the CLA to better understand the current record access picture. Other data gathering opportunities will be considered.

4.0 Research ethics and risk

The project was noted as having obtained ethical approval from UCL Ethics Committee.

It was raised that a risk register was required for the research. It was agreed to draft a risk register for the AG to review.

Action: EL

EL will produce a research risk register.

5.0 Research project impact strategy

The impact strategy was discussed. AG noted that 'Improve Care Leavers life' should go first in the impact bullets as the top priority. Otherwise all agreed the three overarching aims were appropriate.

The need to link to a wide range of stakeholders was discussed, including:

- those with experience of an aspect of care;
- professionals delivering any aspect of recordkeeping support (social workers, care workers, foster carers, records managers and archivists etc);
- local and national Government including in the devolved administrations;
- policy makers, law makers, MPs;
- charities, campaign groups and connected organisations;
- educators of social workers;
- Inspectors in Ofsted;
- Open Data community.

These networks would underpin the mechanisms to then deliver the outcomes to provide change and impact. It was noted to be needed to monitor for opportunities to engage with consultations and policy change. All should review the impact strategy.

Action: All

All to provide any further comments to VH on the impact strategy.

6.0 Progress so far

An update was provided.

7.0 Next steps

The minutes of the meeting will be shared and a workspace set up for collaboration. All should send through any further thoughts and comments to VH. Those who could not attend will be encouraged to add to the debate.

Action: All

All to review and add comments on the project needs.

8.0 AOB

Research colleagues in Australia led by Dr Joanne Evans have asked for copies of the Impact Strategy. It was agreed this could be shared to targeted individuals in confidence but should not be made more publicly available as it will evolve.

Action: ES

ES to share Impact Strategy with Dr Joanne Evans and her research colleagues under a duty of confidence.