

# WELCOME TO APSW KEE 1: 1000+ registrants

## Please can we ask you to:

- Keep camera and mics **OFF** in order to minimize disturbance and interference
- Use the chat for posting comments and questions
- Do tweet at [#APSWORG](#) or [#KEE2021](#)
- For any tech problems we suggest you log out and back in



## After the event we will:

- Post a recording on the APSW website - <http://apsw.org/>
- Make available a KEE briefing for each KEE on the APSW website
- Let you know about possible plans for a KEE 5 for discussion and dialogue

# **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK AND SOCIAL CARE**

## **Knowledge and Evidence Event 1: Alternative Service Delivery Models**

**Professors Marian Brandon, Eileen Munro  
and Nicky Stanley**

**APSW May 21**

[#APSWORG](#) or [#KEE2021](#)

**Lessons from  
National Analyses of SCRs  
2003-2017**

**Marian Brandon  
Emeritus Professor of Social Work  
University of East Anglia**

SCRs 2003-2017 - most recently *Complexity and Challenge: a triennial analysis of SCRs 2014-17*  
(Brandon, Sidebotham et al 2020)

**Complexity**  
of children's and families' lives

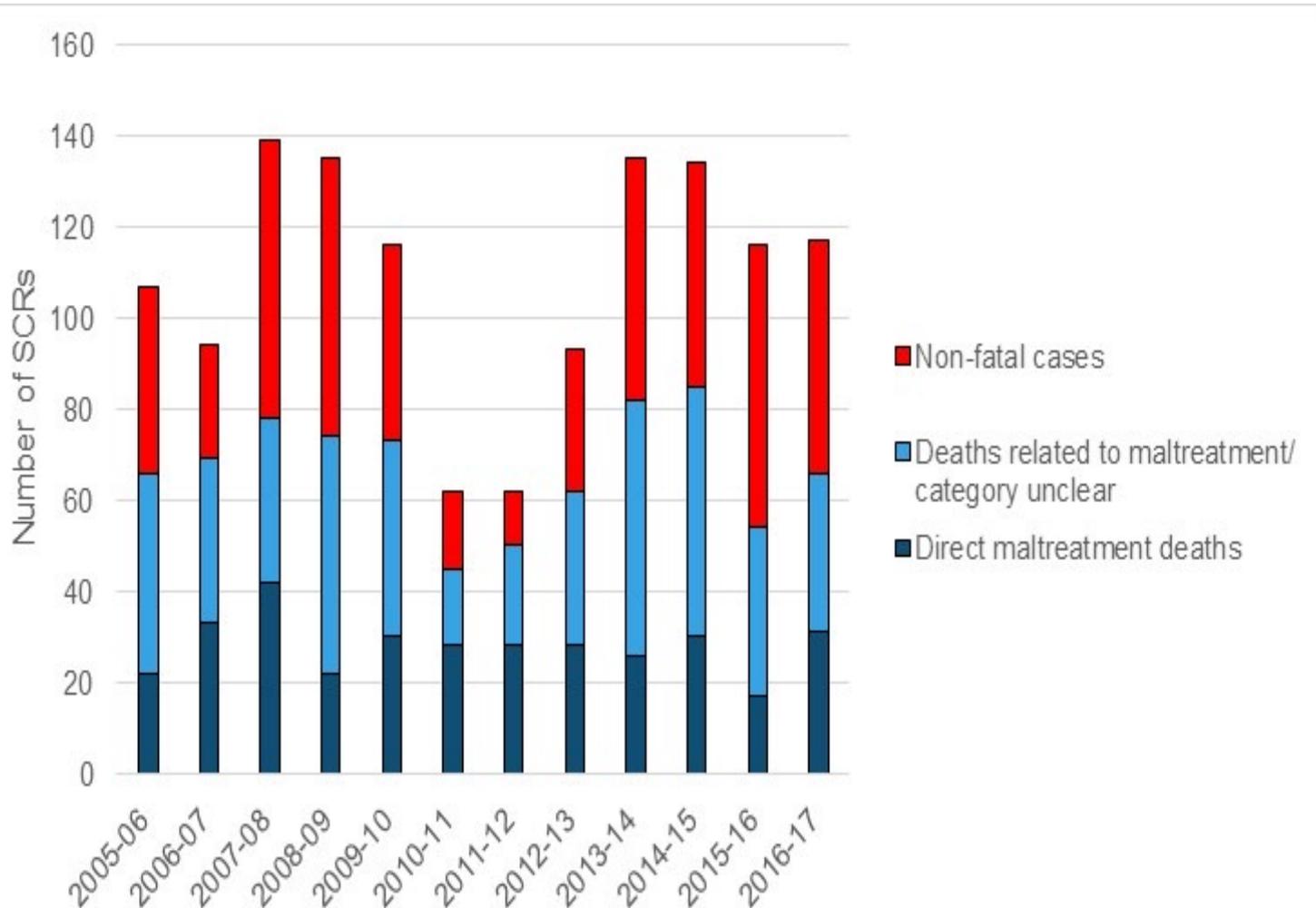
Complex, cumulative nature of vulnerability, risk and harm (including mounting poverty)

**Challenge**  
facing professionals

Working with family complexity in the context of deepening austerity and cuts

Protecting all children from harm is not possible

# The CP system is protecting children (SCRs, England 2005-2017)



## Child death related to maltreatment

- Around 26-28 child deaths directly related to maltreatment per year
- This rate has been relatively stable, **not** increasing (until 2020 - National Panel Jan 2021)
- 2014-17 - 15% of SCR's with child on child protection plan

# Need for support/protection and responsive boundaries - over time

CSC involvement 2014-7	Percentage of cases n=278
Open case	55%
Previously known, closed case (inc with past CP plan)	22%
Case referred, below threshold	6%
Never known to CSC	16%

- Throughout our SCR analyses since 2003, around half of the children were **not** part of an 'open case' to CSC
- But less than 1 in 5 children had 'never' been known to CSC
- Importance of support for known vulnerabilities over time

# Key messages

- Where children die or are seriously harmed through abuse there is a high level of complexity and individual differences between each case. Children cannot always be protected.
- The boundaries between services and levels of need and harm should be fluid and responsive as intended by the Children Act 1989. Most children had been known to children's social care in the past if not at the time of death/harm. Children and families with known vulnerabilities may need services long term.
- Trusting relationships with families are the best route to seeing when things are going badly wrong.
- Trusting professional relationships within and across agencies make it easier to protect children, support families and share information safely.

# Lessons from the Munro Review

Eileen Munro  
Emeritus Professor of Social Policy  
London School of Economics



THE LONDON SCHOOL  
OF ECONOMICS AND  
POLITICAL SCIENCE ■



# Findings

A system where the focus had slowly shifted from children's safety and well-being to processes, leading to compliance with procedures squeezing out time for forming respectful and helpful relationships with children and their families.

The feedback loops from front line workers and families that reported this disfunction were outweighed by the inputs from the DfE, Ofsted and SCRs.

The unavoidable uncertainty in child protection work was hidden by a culture that treated compliance with procedures as safe practice, providing the 'due diligence' defence.

Anxiety about making fallible judgments led to over-referral and over-investigation, with insufficient focus on engaging constructively with families and helping them – failing to meet the ambition of the 89 Children Act of working collaboratively as much as possible.

# What I recommended:

An understanding and acceptance of the unavoidable uncertainty and fallibility of professional judgments and the role of supervision/teams in improving them.

A major reduction in Working Together to create more opportunity for creativity in CSCs at both managerial and worker-family level.

A change in the inspection framework to look for evidence of quality and impact.

A whole system reform of each CSC to embed a clear practice framework and to shift the organizational focus from compliance to impact on children and families

# What has happened

- Major reduction in rules
- Ofsted focus on impact on children and families
- 40% funding cuts and increased referrals
- Some CSCs have made whole system change with 'outstanding' (Ofsted judgement) results
- Too few have done so
- Current review should explore why so few have changed and how to spread the confidence and expertise to reform

# Social Work Practices: An Experiment in Outsourcing

Nicky Stanley,  
Professor of Social Work,  
University of Central Lancashire

# 2009-10: Social Work Practices (SWPs) for looked after children & care leavers

- CYPA 2008 – permitted LAs to transfer statutory responsibilities for children in out-of-home care to independent social work led organisations.
- SWPs to operate outside local authority management akin to GP practices.
- Difficulties in tendering & recruiting SWPs: only 5 of the 9 SWPs planned were commissioned.
- Variety of models:
  - 2 professional practice (one private, one social enterprise)
  - 2 managed by voluntary organisations
  - 1 stayed within LA: in-house model
- **Evaluation 2009-12** (Stanley et al 2013): 5 SWP pilots matched with comparison LAs; 225 interviews with LAC; interviews with parents; SWP staff; commissioners; IROs; other professionals; EAG members; staff and carers surveyed; analysis of care plans, DfE 903 data and SWP workforce data.
- **2014:** 3 pilots did not have contract renewed; in-house SWP absorbed back into LA; only one pilot still operational.

# Key Measures for Children & Young People

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**Quality of Relationships:** vast majority of CYP in both SWPs and comparison sites reported allocated workers **listened to them, cared about them and did their best:**

*“She's been out looking for me at like God knows what time in the morning...so she, she's not like other social workers.”* (Care leaver, SWP)

*“by the time I'd come back ...my flat was fully decorated and carpeted and everything and she wasn't even at work...she goes out of her way like for people”*(Care leaver, comparison site)

**Accessibility:** No differences between SWPs and comparison sites – differences reported between SWPs and between workers.

**Continuity:** SWP children more likely to report worker continuity in last year but staff turnover high in 2 SWPs and continuity undermined by changes of key worker on transfer in and out of SWPs:

*“I think the Social Services doesn't really think about the kids, I think they just think about themselves because think about it, I knew [my social worker] nearly all my life yeah, and then they just go and change it”* (Looked after 14 yr old, SWP)

Most SWPs successful in reducing placement changes in year 1 but not in SWP using incentives to cut placement costs and private sector placements.

# Organisational Measures

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- SWPs remained highly dependent on LAs for start-up and survival:
  - Most successful SWP – high level of support from LA
  - Least successful SWP – low level of support from LA
- SWPs reliant on LAs for supervision, training, legal services, insurance, IT, out-of-hours services; premises & equipment; job security; advice on complex cases and child protection work
- No evidence that SWPs reduced costs.
- No differences between SWP staff and comparison site staff in time spent on form-filling
- Staff morale higher on some measures in SWPs but counteracted by higher job insecurity
- Staff satisfaction linked to:
  - opportunities for direct work with CYP
  - supervision and workplace support
  - smaller caseloads

# Key Messages

- SWPs did not achieve full independence: public and independent sectors interdependent.
- Smaller case loads, supervision and direct work with children & families increase staff satisfaction - these characteristics are determined by level of resource.
- No differences between SWPs and LA controls in quality of relationships & accessibility to children & families.
- Outsourcing does not make for continuity of relationships or organisation – SWPs proved fragile & unsustainable: LAs better placed to offer continuity.

# THE CHAT COMMENTS

**LOUISE BROWN**

**PROFESSOR OF INTERNATIONAL SOCIAL WORK AND INNOVATION**

**UNIVERSITY OF BATH**



# REFLECTIONS AND BIG MESSAGES



# REFLECTIONS AND BIG MESSAGES

- **CONTINUITY AND STABILITY**
- **BE WARY OF FRAGMENTATION**
- **CONFIDENCE TO WORK WITH UNCERTAINTY**
- **RELATIONSHIPS AND RESOURCES**
- **CAPACITY, CASH AND TIME**



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KEE2: Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

- Monday May 24<sup>th</sup> 12-1pm
- Professors Claudia Bernard, Rick Hood, Brid Featherstone and Anna Gupta
- Register NOW:

<https://apsw.org.uk/events>