

Institution: University of Wolverhampton
Unit of Assessment: 3 – Allied Health Professions, Dentistry, Nursing and Pharmacy
Title of case study: Research to inform prevention of child deaths and serious abuse and neglect
1. Summary of the impact (indicative maximum 100 words)

Vincent’s research comprises a UK comparison of child death review policy, development of a Scottish evidence base and a comparative study of child death review across six countries. The research has had an impact on public policy to protect children. It has stimulated international, national and local policy debate and changed policy. It has also had an impact on practitioners and services. Professionals from a range of disciplines have used the research findings in conducting their work and it has had an influence on inter-agency child protection guidelines and on multi agency training.

2. Underpinning research (indicative maximum 500 words)
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The impact that is being described in this case study relates to two research studies that were undertaken or completed by Sharon Vincent since she joined the University of Wolverhampton in December 2011 firstly an audit and analysis of significant case reviews and secondly preventing child deaths: learning from review.

Vincent undertook a programme of research into Child Death Review (CDR) from 2008-2011 when she worked at a previous institution. This work identified a significant gap in knowledge in Scotland and an urgent need for national data (Vincent 2012). In comparison with England and Wales, and despite a commitment to national learning within national guidance, the findings from significant case reviews (SCRs) were not being collated nationally in Scotland and the Scottish Government were not able to establish how many reviews were being undertaken. After moving to the University of Wolverhampton the Scottish Government, in recognition of Vincent’s previous research and expertise in the area, invited her to submit a tender to undertake an audit and analysis of significant case reviews in Scotland. In January 2012 she was commissioned to undertake this research in collaboration with Professor Alison Petch from the Institute of Research and Innovation in Social Services (IRISS) in Glasgow. The findings from the audit and review were published in 2012 (Vincent and Petch 2012). They provide an important evidence base for Scotland and have had a significant impact on local and national policy and practice in Scotland which is outlined in Section 4 below.

In 2010 Vincent was awarded a Leverhulme research fellowship to undertake a study entitled ‘Preventing child deaths: learning from review’. This was a comparative study of CDR across six countries. Vincent completed this research and wrote up the findings of the project at the University of Wolverhampton. The findings have been published in a paper for Child Abuse Review (Vincent, 2013) as well as in a book (Vincent 2013). As described below, Vincent’s work has contributed to the international evidence base and been utilised by policy makers and professionals engaged in child death review, or in developing child death review procedures, in a number of countries.

3. References to the research (indicative maximum of six references)

Publications

Vincent, S. (2013) Child Death Review: a comparison of six countries. Child Abuse Review. Published online in Wiley Online Library (wileyonlinelibrary.com) DOI: 10.1002/car.2276 (peer reviewed journal article submitted to REF in 2014).

Vincent, S. (2013) Preventing Child Deaths: Learning from Review, ISSN 1756-0691 Edinburgh, Dunedin (peer reviewed book).

This book has been reviewed widely. For example:

Impact case study (REF3b)

- 1) 'This current book is helpful in presenting the systems within each country context, the variation within and between countries in terms of processes, and the ways in which policy makers have sought to use the learning to shape the policy and practice response. This latter part of the book **is particularly important, providing reference points for considering how the learning from individual reviews might be considered in terms of driving improvements in how individual practitioners and the systems they work within** might become stronger. The book also helpfully argues that much of the key learning might better be considered from a public health perspective' Devaney, J. (2013). British Journal of Social Work (2013) 43, 1455–1461
- 2) 'The book is an important contribution to the literature on child health, child protection and child deaths; **it is unique in its international analysis of child death review committees and their role in overcoming child deaths.** Its topic area is growing in significance and the book is one of the few policy guides available. It is relevant to all university based disciplines in the child health and welfare area and to all the policy staff and professional practitioners in these areas. **It will challenge readers by raising many complex issues for consideration and it will also lead them to a great deal of reflection and debate.**' Brown, T (2013) Children Australia.

Stafford, A; Parton, N; **Vincent, S**; Smith, C. (2012) Child Protection Systems in the UK: A Comparative Analysis, London, Jessica Kingsley (Chapter 8 on Child Death Review was written solely by Vincent) (peer reviewed book submitted to REF in 2014). Favourable review including: Saunders, B. (2013) The International Journal of Children's Rights, 21: 1, 171-174.

Vincent, S; Petch, A. (2012) Audit and Analysis of Significant Case Reviews, Scottish Government. This report has had considerable impact on policy and practice to protect children and young people in Scotland as evidenced below.

Research grants

2012 Audit and Analysis of Significant Case Reviews, Commissioned by Scottish Government £10,000.

4. Details of the impact (indicative maximum 750 words)**Impacts on public policy and services**

Vincent's research has influenced government policy. Her research findings led the Scottish Government to rewrite national guidance on SCRs. Vincent is a member of the working group tasked with doing this and chair of the Family Involvement sub-group. She has played a major role in the rewrite.

Vincent presented the findings of the Audit and Review at a Child Protection Committee (CPC) Chairs Meeting attended by 60 representatives from all CPCs in Scotland and at a Scottish Government seminar attended by 50 civil servants and senior managers from CPCs. The Western Isles CPC organised their own seminar to consider the findings at which Vincent presented to 50 policy makers, managers and practitioners. She also delivered the key note presentation at a Central and North East Scotland Child Protection Consortium Inter-Agency Practitioner Seminar attended by 120 practitioners, senior managers and councillors which considered the implications of the research for local policy and practice. Feedback forms provide evidence that attendees aimed to use the research findings to inform policy, practice or training. Perth and Kinross CPC benchmarked their local arrangements, policies and practices, against Vincent's research. This led to them reviewing their SCR Protocol; reviewing and updating Practitioner Guidance on Information Sharing; Confidentiality; and Consent; producing an OnLine Practitioner's Toolkit; reviewing and updating Practitioner Guidance on CPCC Meetings; Single and Integrated Chronologies; and Assessments; developing a training course to further develop joint working between adult and Children's Services; reviewing their approach to Children Affected by Domestic Abuse, Parental Mental Health and Parental Substance Misuse; and further developing their use of CPC

Impact case study (REF3b)

Management Information and Statistics. North Ayrshire used the research findings to inform analysis of the data they collect; alongside local self-evaluation and audit material to ensure they are aware of common themes in cases of child death and serious abuse; to inform the development of a template for social service team managers to identify risk when reviewing the effectiveness of child protection plans; in the development of multi-agency guidance for the sharing of information between adult and children's services; and referenced it in their roll out of the National Risk Framework.

Vincent's research has also stimulated international policy debate. Vincent has responded to numerous requests for information and advice from people engaged in CDR in Australia, New Zealand, the US, Canada and South Africa. Some of these requests have come from individuals who have been asked to set up new CDR processes and her research has been used to inform the models they have selected. For example:

'I have come across your publication – Preventing Child Death as well as a forthcoming publication in the journal Child Abuse Review. I am really interested to draw lessons from your work as it will be critical to inform our process in South Africa' (Director of the Children's Institute, South Africa, August 2013).

Vincent was asked to provide a key note address at the Third Australian Conference on Child Death Inquiries and Reviews in Sydney in 2012. The conference was attended by 200 individuals involved in undertaking CDR across Australia and New Zealand. While in Sydney she was also invited to meet the New South Wales Minister for Family and Community Services to discuss child protection.

Impacts on practitioners and services

Professional guidelines and training have been influenced by the research and practitioners have used it in conducting their work. Perth and Kinross CPC use Vincent's findings and cite her publications in their Two-Day Inter-Agency Child Protection Training Course. North Ayrshire CPC has integrated the research into a number of their multi-agency child protection training programmes, including training aimed at managers. Vincent has received email communications from professionals who have attended her presentations or read her publications stating that they have used her research findings to inform their practice. For example:

'We have started to track risk factors present in the cases we review for child welfare. Your section on risk factors will be very helpful' (Member of the Death under five Committee, Chief Coroner's Office, Ontario, Canada, November 2012)

'I gave a presentation yesterday morning to the whole of my office on my trip to Belfast. I presented information from your slides in regard to the value of child death inquiries.' (Project Officer, Office of the Child Safety Commissioner, Victoria, Australia, May 2012)

'Without doubt the book and the research has informed our thinking, has shaped our practice arrangements and highlighted to us local risks.' (Child Protection Inter-Agency Coordinator, Perth and Kinross Council, January 2013).

5. Sources to corroborate the impact (indicative maximum of 10 references)

Evidence of the impact and influence of the research is demonstrated by the fact that Sharon Vincent has been invited to participate in the following activities as a direct result of the research she has undertaken:

1) 2013 Invited to present at an international conference of policy makers, professionals and academics to address filicide in Prato, Italy.

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2) 2012 Invited by the NSPCC to attend and speak at an expert seminar on Serious Case Reviews in London to inform NSPCC policy.

3) 2012 Invited to be a symposium chair and presenter at the keeping Children safe in an uncertain world: Learning from Evidence and Practice, BASPCAN Congress in Belfast for policy makers, professionals and academics engaged in protecting children.

Documentary evidence from Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee:

4) Inter Agency Child Protection Training Extracts, copies available on request

5) Central and North East Scotland Child Protection Consortium, Case Review Seminar Evaluations, copies available on request

6) Audit and Analysis of Significant Case Reviews – Dr Sharon Vincent, copies available on request

7) Perth and Kinross Child Protection Committee Business Activity Report, copies available on request