

# **Children, Health and Politics: Risk, Policy and the Law workshop 2015**

Staff and PhD students are warmly invited to the 2015 annual workshop of the Risk, Policy and the Law research group of the Centre for Medical Humanities at Sheffield.

**Friday, 5 June 2015 9.15 a.m. – 1 p.m.**

Humanities Research Institute Seminar Room

The RPL group's 2015 annual workshop will focus on work-in-progress on the theme 'Children, Health and Politics'. Four researchers from across the university will pre-circulate written work and briefly present on their papers at the workshop. The event will focus on a critical discussion of the circulated work in order to draw out key overarching themes related to the nexus of risk, policy and the law.

The workshop will be particularly relevant for anyone with an interest in exploring children, health and politics from a perspective that links risk and policy. It will also appeal to individuals with a substantive interest in the specific topics of individual papers. PhD students and early-careers researchers who are interested in the process of transforming draft work into journal submissions are especially welcome!

To register, please contact Matthias Benzer ([m.benzer@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:m.benzer@sheffield.ac.uk)) or Julia Moses ([j.moses@sheffield.ac.uk](mailto:j.moses@sheffield.ac.uk)).

## **9.15 a.m. Refreshments / Introductions**

### **9.30 a.m. Panel I**

Matthias Benzer (Sociological Studies): 'NICE Power: the biopolitics of health technology appraisal'.

*The concept of biopower developed by Foucault informs ever more sociological analyses of the politics of health. Drawing on a qualitative analysis of documents that codify the process of health technology appraisal of the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE), this paper examines to what extent*

*conceptions of biopolitics can elucidate the political dimension of health resource allocation. Foucault's category of security, specifically his concepts of the politics of nature and of desire, can illuminate the political dimension of NICE's efforts to maximise population health, especially the biopolitics of the QALY (quality-adjusted life year) method. However, the political dimension of NICE's simultaneous pursuit of equality objectives with regard to moral principles and legal obligations, which incorporates an endeavour to establish social relations, stretches beyond the horizon of conceptions of biopolitics. The paper reconfigures a well-known tension in NICE technology appraisal in political terms and formulates ensuing questions for: present developments in NICE's work and in work with QALYs more broadly, current proposals for resolving the conflict between efficiency and equality aims in health resource allocation, and analyses of the contemporary politics of life.*

Vicky Chico (Law): 'Requiring Genetic Knowledge: a principled case for support'.

*Should people be required to know information about themselves that arises from their genetic test? This question is highly relevant given the NHS's plans to sequence 100 000 whole genomes before 2017. The approach to this issue in the US generated significant opposition to requiring knowledge on the basis that it interferes with autonomy. This piece presents a different perspective arguing that requiring knowledge may not undermine the legal conception of autonomy, giving reason to doubt that it would be unlawful to require people to have genetic information about themselves. Following this the piece presents an alternative principled position which might support a legal recognition of the interest in not having information about oneself; namely that of preventing personal harm. However this approach runs into difficulties if the reasons for requiring knowledge are also based on preventing personal harm. The argument considers how interests might be balanced in this competing harms context.*

## **11.00 a.m. Refreshments / break**

## **11.15 a.m. Panel II**

Adrian Bingham (History): 'Scandals and Silences: the British press and child sexual abuse, from Stead to Savile'.

*This paper examines how the British press reported child sexual abuse from the late nineteenth century to the present. It seeks to explain why this issue received considerable attention in some periods - in the 1880s, for example, and again in the 1970s and 1980s - but for much of the intervening time was shrouded by*

*silence and euphemism. These shifts reveal much about the nature of crime journalism, about the press's approach to sex, gender, age and morality, and also about the access different interest groups, campaigners and moral entrepreneurs had to national newspapers.*

Harriet Churchill (Sociological Studies): 'Intensive Family Support and Child Welfare Reforms in UK and Australian Social Policy Contexts: comparing policy and provision developments in England and New South Wales'.

*Recent years have seen expansion in intensive and multi-agency approaches to family support services across the UK and Australia. Indeed policy communities in both of these Anglo-phone and English speaking welfare state contexts are highly inter-connected. National policy and practice developments have been informed by cross-national policy learning, dialogues and transfers between the UK and Australia. Within the spirit of contributing to this cross-national policy learning and gaining a critical comparative understanding of recent developments in family support services, this paper examines developments in intensive family support services introduced as part of children's health, welfare and well-being reforms. The paper in particular critically compares 'politics, policy and practice' in child welfare orientated intensive family support services in England and New South Wales. It examines policy and research perspectives about the role of intensive and multi-agency family support services in promoting child health and welfare, raising critical issues in relation to policy agendas, policy and practice developments, implementation processes and challenges, and service 'outcomes and impacts'.*

## **12.45 p.m. Closing Discussion**

Chair: Julia Moses (History)