



A MESSAGE FROM THE DEAN

Welcome to our School Newsletter!

I'm delighted to share some of the fantastic recent achievements of our colleagues and students from our School community, during this academic year. If you want to keep up to date with all that's happening in the School, then don't forget to regularly visit our [blog](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#). Over the past ten weeks we have been showcasing how work within the School illustrates why the social sciences are so important for the economic, political and social well-being of our community and over the coming year there will be plenty more stories that will develop this theme.

Until then, I wish you all a healthy and happy summer, and hope everyone finds some time for rest and relaxation.

Take care,

John Craig

Dean, Leeds School of Social Sciences

LEEDS BECKETT CRIMINOLOGY STUDENT KEELY HODGKINSON WINS SILVER AT TOKYO OLYMPICS

First year Criminology student Keely Hodgkinson has won a silver medal in her 800m Olympic debut.



19-year-old Keely broke the 800m British record by nearly a second with an incredible 1:55.58 finish to claim silver in Tokyo. The record was previously held by Dame Kelly Holmes DBE who ran 1:56.21 in 1995.

Professor John Craig, the Dean of Leeds School of Social Sciences said, "The whole school has been thrilled by Keely's magnificent performance. We are all very proud of her and her achievements".

Andrew Henderson, Head Coach of Athletics said, "The race was absolutely amazing and it's such a thrill to see Keely win silver and break Kelly Holmes' British record."

Keely is one of a number of athletes associated with Leeds Beckett performing at the Olympics, and we are proud of all of their achievements.

Read more [here](#).

EVALUATING THE GRIFFIN PROGRAMME: A TRAUMA SPECIFIC INTERVENTION

Dr. Alexandria Bradley talks about her work with the Griffin Programme, which supports the needs of women in residential recovery services, who have histories of sex work, sexual trauma and substance abuse.

Our evaluation, conducted in July 2019, was funded by [CeASR](#) and The Nelson Trust. It included the perspectives of women who had taken part in the Griffin Programme and staff who had facilitated the intervention. The findings of this research highlighted the profound and empowering impact of a group of women sharing experiences of shame.

Love is not a traditional word used within the Criminal Justice System, however when working with trauma, loving approaches are key to the successful recovery of women healing from trauma and sex working histories.

Read more [here](#).

BEING SAFE AND FEELING SAFE: DISCUSSION OF SEXUAL HARASSMENT AND GENDER- BASED VIOLENCE



BA (Hons) Sociology student Hannah Crossley talks about her experience speaking at the event, 'Women's Safety: Sexual Harassment, Violence, Unwanted Behaviour and Attention'.

"After attending a vigil for Sarah Everard, I decided to contact Leeds Beckett to see if they could look at ways to help prevent these crimes and address the severity of gender-based violence. After a discussion with Course Director, Dr Natalia Gerodetti, Dr Chris Till organised the event. I spoke at length on what had to be done to create a safer environment for women. On reflection, this event has given me a sense of optimism that things will change."

For more information about the event click [here](#).



AUTISM AND EMPLOYMENT: WHAT NEXT?

For this year's World Autism Awareness Week we highlighted the challenges faced by autistic graduates and detailed a research project running here at Leeds Beckett.

Autism is lifelong which means autistic children grow up to be autistic adults. Many autistic adults still struggle in older age with socialising and interacting with peers.

In the UK, increasing numbers of university students are disclosing an autism diagnosis with at least 12,000 student disclosures in the year 2017/18. However, the number of autistic graduates attaining employment remains alarmingly low with the workplace environment presenting social challenges.

At Leeds Beckett, we are running the [IMAGE](#) (Improving Employability of Autistic Graduates in Europe) project. The project focuses on the skills and strengths that autistic graduates bring to employers and promotes the sharing of good practice amongst universities and employers.

Read more [here](#).

A VIRTUAL PLACEMENT: A STUDENT PERSPECTIVE

MSc Speech and Language Therapy student, Joel Fawcett, talks about his experience undertaking a virtual placement from his home in the USA.

“Last year, I undertook a virtual placement opportunity with a hospital's SLT service. It involved working one-to-one with a client giving them a chance to practice conversation skills and experience social interaction during the pandemic. Lasting approximately three months, the sessions took place through Microsoft Teams. This was due to being abroad in my home country, the United States.



Through this experience I developed crucial skills that I will take with me into future clinical practice. I learned valuable clinical skills including strengthening session planning, functional goal writing and SMART target writing. I am so

grateful to my supervisor and the University for providing me with this opportunity!”

Read more [here](#).

REPRESENTATIONS OF PRECONCEPTION HEALTH IN THE MEDIA

Dr Kirsty Budds discusses her research on the implications of preconception health for women of reproductive age.

Women have long been advised to adopt healthier behaviours once a pregnancy is confirmed. However, there is increasing concern that women's health before they conceive impacts on pregnancy and birth outcomes.

This has prompted calls for public health advice and interventions to be targeted at women before pregnancy.

Dr Budd's research examines how information regarding preconception health advice is communicated within the media. The study showed how discussions of preconception health, pose significant implications for women of reproductive age, imposing limits on their choices and autonomy as they are expected to manage their lifestyles for the sake of future children.

Read more [here](#).

FROM CAUTIONS AND CUSTODY TO CLASSROOMS AND COLLABORATIONS

Senior Lecture, Hannah Bond, discusses her decision to change careers.



Upon handing my notice as an NHS clinician I found out that my hard work as a lead SLT in a youth offending team (YOT) had finally paid off. Funding had just been secured with NHS England. I had the

decision to remain a clinician or venture into academia as a Senior Lecturer.

Leaving this challenging work behind sounds appealing but it was also a privileged position. I was able to work alongside the most vulnerable young people in Bradford. Their desire to make changes for themselves and helping them on this journey was the most rewarding feeling.

After considering which path to take, I decided to embrace the new challenge. It was not a proper goodbye to the area of youth justice as I will be able to bring some moving patient journeys to inspire students as well as some unique SLT experiences.

I look forward to building relationships with my fantastic new team members who have already offered me lots of support.

Read more [here](#).

NEW HOME OFFICE REPORT CHALLENGES RACIAL STEREOTYPES CONNECTED WITH GROOMING GANGS

Dr Waqas Tufail along with Dr Ella Cockbain from University College London has contributed to a new Home Office Report titled, [Group based child sexual exploitation characteristics of offending](#). It dispels key racial stereotypes associated with “grooming gangs”.

The widely held belief that only Muslim men of Pakistani heritage are offenders in “grooming gangs” was perpetuated by the far-right and had advanced into mainstream consciousness.

The study highlights that there are no grounds to assume Muslim or Pakistani-heritage men are disproportionately responsible for these crimes. The majority of group-based offenders are white. The findings do not dismiss the horrific nature of crimes that took place in Rochdale, Oxford and Telford. They do however address the racial stereotyping that arose from them.

Read more [here](#).

MY EXPERIENCE WORKING FOR THE LBU COLD CASE UNIT

Criminology student Louisa Bass shares her experience of being part of the Cold Case Unit.

I came to Leeds Beckett to study Criminology with the dream of becoming a detective. I always had an interest in crime, rehabilitation and solving cases. When I got the opportunity to become part of the Leeds Beckett Cold Case Unit (CCU), I couldn't refuse.

Our team began looking into the case of Charles Horvath-Allan who went missing over 30 years ago in Kelowna, British Columbia. We used various techniques when looking into the case to try and uncover new facts.

Being on the team has provided me with a range of skills in teamwork, IT, investigation, organisation and communication. Being appointed Senior Investigative Officer also gave me leadership experience. Aside from the investigation itself, I have most enjoyed the investigation and being in weekly contact with the team.



Read more [here](#).

RECOUNT OF DEMOCRATIC TRANSITION IN NIGER

In his piece titled, "[Niger's democratic transition is good news, but the threat of insurgency remains high](#)" Dr Olayinka Ajala recounts that in December 2020 Niger held its first election to transfer power from one civilian regime to another.

However, due to results being inconclusive a rerun was scheduled for February 2021. The election marked the successful completion of President Mahamadou Issoufou's two-term tenure.

Yet, despite key progress being made, there are still factors threatening the country's political stability. These include the trafficking of weapons, humans and drugs as well as conflict in neighbouring countries.

The threat of conflict is something that the newly elected president will need to confront. The winner will be faced with tackling these fundamental issues and maintaining the stability that has been in place since 2011.

GRADUATE STORY: CIARON BOLES, LABOUR PARTY COUNCILLOR

BA (Hons) Politics graduate, Ciaron Boles, discusses how his degree and the volunteering module inspired his success and career choice.

"The politics courses blend of critique and employability was most prevalent in the volunteering module. It initially seemed like a box-ticking exercise however I recommend every student to embrace it. It's the module that began my journey into becoming a Labour councillor.

I loved the experience and it allowed me to become confident in myself when expressing my political views. Without this module I would not have dipped my toe into local activism and become a Labour councillor.

Leeds Beckett gave me lifelong friends and a critical outlook on politics that is required now more than ever.

I would not be who I am today without the support of the Leeds Beckett Politics department.”

Read more [here](#).



ACTIVISTS AND ACADEMICS TEAM UP TO EXPLORE CONCEPTS OF SECURITY

Leeds School of Arts, Dr Jill Gibbon and Leeds School of Social Sciences, Professor Rachel Julian have been awarded £5,000 by the Independent Social Research Foundation (ISRF) for their project, *Picturing security in an age of climate breakdown*.

Extinction Rebellion (XR) activists will team up with academics in peace studies and graphic arts to create collaborative drawings and montaged animations.

Through the drawings, the group will share their experiences, insights and artefacts from their activism and research. They will develop an understanding of how we negotiate abstract concepts of the term ‘security’ in relation to our own lived experiences.

Material from the workshops will be made into a montage animation – juxtaposing elements as a means of disrupting fixed meanings.

Listen to [Dr Jill Gibbon's recent Beckett Talks podcast](#) to find out more about her research.

REFLECTIONS ON OUR ONLINE SOCIOLOGY OF GENDER CONFERENCE

In March, the Sociology group held the annual student conference as part of the assessments on the Sociology of Gender module. Students worked in groups designing and executing a small research project working collaboratively and using digital tools.

Jade Parkin, Year 2, BA Sociology: “Initially, I was really worried about how me and my teammates would be able to carry out research however thanks to online tools such as Zoom we could communicate effectively.

We focused on the gendered challenges faced by key workers whilst working for the NHS during COVID-19. We found that since COVID-19 women are more likely to take on

a triple shift whilst caring for family members.

Naturally, I get nervous during presentations, but doing it from the comfort of my own surroundings helped me on the day and it was a great experience.”

Mishani Ketheswaran, Year 2, BA Sociology: “My group project looked at the gendered perceptions of employees who worked in the automobile industry. We investigated the differences between the views of men and women and the stereotypes that may prevent individuals from achieving their highest potential.

While I was initially nervous about presenting, it was refreshing to know that what I was being listened to and noted by students. The conference helped me get an idea of what I would face during my higher education journey, while allowing me to appreciate the wonderful efforts of my peers.”

Read more [here](#).

PUBLICATION NEWS

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Shaw, M. (2021) 'Student sex work during a pandemic.' Covid-19 Special Paper, UCL Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science. https://www.ucl.ac.uk/jill-dando-institute/sites/jill-dando-institute/files/27_student_sex_work_final.pdf

Spracklen, K. and Spracklen, L. (Published 21 July 2021), 'Workington Man, Brexit and populism: Discussions of politics, identity and class among rugby league fans online', British Politics. <https://doi.org/10.1057/s41293-021-00191-7>

Swain, S., Lashua, B. and Spracklen, K. (2021). 'Khat-chewing, moral spacing and belonging: Sociological insights into the cultural space of the mafrish in the leisure lives of older and middle-aged British-Somali males'. International Journal of the Sociology of Leisure. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s41978-020-00079-8>

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Keep up to date with all the news by reading the blogs written by the staff within the School: leedsbeckett.ac.uk/blogs/leeds-school-of-social-sciences

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