

# Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP)

## The past, present and future of excellent social policy research

### 25 years of Social Policy Research

“My decision to join CRSP in September 2006 was made primarily on CRSP’s reputation to undertake successful and innovative social policy research. I was excited to be joining a team of highly skilled academic researchers and administrators who consistently produce work of the highest quality.

Taking CRSP in to the future will also be exciting. We will be building on our existing Framework agreements and extending our area of research in the field of youth studies, health and disability while continuing our success in areas such as poverty and work and welfare.”

**On behalf of the rest of the Centre and staff, past and present, I would like to take the opportunity to say thank you ...**

CRSP’s history of success is primarily built upon its staff but we recognise that we couldn’t have got where we are today without the excellent support of the University and its various Departments. We particularly thank the University Vice-Chancellor Professor Shirley Pearce and her predecessor Professor Sir David Wallace, who have shown their support in many ways, including the opening of numerous CRSP events. We thank our existing Consultative Committee members and past and present Advisory Groups who have provided their experience and expertise in shaping CRSP’s strategic objectives over the last 25 years and afforded valuable support for numerous projects. In addition, CRSP recognises the support of all our collaborators and sponsors, and last, but by no means least, our host department.

Professor Alan France, CRSP Director

[www.crsp.ac.uk](http://www.crsp.ac.uk)



# CRSP: Past, Present and Future

## 1983 Centre for Research in Social Policy

Founded in **1983**, the Centre for Research in Social Policy (CRSP) is widely regarded as one of Britain's most influential social policy research centres.

Located in the Department of Social Sciences at Loughborough University, the Centre was founded by Professor Sir Adrian Webb who was then Head of Department. The Centre started with seven members of staff consisting of four researchers, a full-time and a part-time Secretary and a part-time Executive Officer.

During this period, a number of small and medium scale research projects, including a series concerned with self help groups in the arena of health and social care were undertaken along with one of the UK's first major national policy evaluations, the Opportunities for Volunteering Programme. At that time, CRSP's main funding source was the Department of Health.

Subsequently a major study was undertaken by Adrian and Dr Jill Vincent with Alan Deacon, University of Leeds, exploring the processes and consequences of the closure of hostels (known as 'spikes') that traditionally had been provided for working men as they moved for seasonal jobs. This led to further work concerning housing and homelessness.



CRSP Directors 1983-2006. From left to right: Professor Sir Adrian Webb, Sue Middleton, Dr Bruce Stafford and Professor Robert Walker.

## Professor Robert Walker appointed Director

Following Professor Robert Walker's appointment as Director in **1990**, CRSP expanded both its research interests and funding base, particularly in the fields of social security research and, more generally, the interaction between people's living standards and lifestyles.

Also in this year two researchers at CRSP, Anne Peaker and Dr Jill Vincent, published 'Arts in Prisons: towards a sense of achievement'. This seminal study showed that an extraordinary range and variety of arts activities were widespread in prisons; however, there was little institutional support for these activities and provision was fragile because it rested on the enthusiasm of relatively isolated individuals.

CRSP logo 1983-2003.



Redesigned in 2004.



1990

1992

## Unit for the Arts & Offenders established

This led in **1992** to Anne and Jill establishing the Unit for the Arts and Offenders, an independent unit based within CRSP whose goals were to:

- advocate for the arts;
- bring together officers from the Arts Council, the Home Office and the Prison Service and develop a shared language;
- support and develop projects;
- provide training for artists who worked in the special and peculiar circumstances of prisons;
- carry out research; and
- make international links.

Under Anne's direction, the Unit grew from strength to strength, achieving its original aims and more, until it became independent and was established as a registered charity and limited liability company incorporated on 21st October 1996. Anne joined CRSP again, as a visiting fellow, for a year, from December 1999 to December 2000.

Anne Peaker retired in May 1999 as Director of the Unit and sadly passed away in 2000. The Unit was then relocated to Canterbury and later renamed The Anne Peaker Centre for Arts in Criminal Justice, to better reflect its national remit and to honour its founder. Anne's pioneering work continues to inspire the Centre and she left a legacy which still forms the basis of its work today under its new Director, Bridget Edwards. Dr Jill Vincent, who is also a member of the CRSP Consultative Committee, continues as Chair of the Board of Trustees of the Anne Peaker Centre.

Further information on the Anne Peaker Centre can be found at [www.apcentre.org.uk](http://www.apcentre.org.uk)

## Establishment of the core funded Social Security Unit

**1996** saw the establishment of the Department of Social Security's core funded research unit within CRSP, under Robert Walker's direction and with Bruce Stafford as Assistant Director. The Unit sat within a new programme of research on Welfare Institutions. At the same time, Sue Middleton, now Research Director, was charged with further developing CRSP's other research interests under the banner of the Lifestyles and Living Standards Programme.

The Centre expanded rapidly during the next few years, taking its funding base from only two funders and 14 members of staff in 1995 to nine funders and 27 members of staff in 2000. Due to the success of the Centre, its staff and the expansion of the number of sponsors, Robert successfully secured open-ended employment contracts for all staff, which is extremely unusual in the field of research.



The launch of the Social Security unit. From left to right: Dr Bruce Stafford, Chris Kelly then Head of DSS Policy Group, and Professor Robert Walker.

1996

2000

# Bruce Stafford & Sue Middleton, Co-Directors of CRSP

In April 2000 Robert Walker left CRSP to become Professor of Social Policy at Nottingham University and has since moved to the Department for Social Policy and Social Work at Oxford University as Professor of Social Policy. On his departure Bruce Stafford and Sue Middleton took over as Co-Directors. The two research programmes were merged and CRSP's work was re-organised around four themes, which served as the focus for CRSP's 21st Conference, held in September 2004. The Centre continued to build on its success, maintaining and developing its reputation for leading large-scale national policy evaluations for government, particularly the Department for Work and Pensions and the (then) Department for Education and Skills, as well as more strategic research funded by bodies such as the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the Economic and Social Research Council.



Alistair Darling, then Secretary of State for Social Security, visited CRSP in November 2000.



Malcolm Wicks, then Parliamentary Under-Secretary for Employment visited CRSP in August 2000.



Professor Robert Walker and Professor Peter Golding (then Head of Social Sciences) at Robert's leaving presentation in March 2000.



Friends and colleagues celebrate Jill Vincent's retirement in November 2000.

## Awarded the rare rating of 5\*A

In the 2001 Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) CRSP, as part of the Department of Social Sciences, was awarded the rare rating of 5\*A indicating the exceptional international quality and excellence of its research. Only five other departments in the UK were similarly rated.



CRSP was presented with a flag and framed certificate, signed by the Governor of Texas, Rick Perry, by Larry Temple - the head of the Texas Workforce Commission, which deals with work and welfare issues - when he attended a two-day international seminar held in London in 2002. Run by CRSP, the workshop, on evidence based policy making, was attended by around 30 UK and US academics and researchers, policy makers and politicians.



Department for Work and Pensions - Social Research Branch, visit CRSP in November 2001.



Sir Richard Tilt and Ann Greenshields (Independent Review Service for the Social Fund) visit CRSP in June 2003. From left to right: Sir Richard Tilt (IRS), Sue Middleton (CRSP), Bruce Stafford (CRSP) and Ann Greenshields (IRS).

2001

2005

## Awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize

In **2005** Loughborough University was awarded the fifth Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education in recognition of outstanding educational achievement in areas that service and are a benefit to the nation. This award was specifically for research in Social Policy, the first time that the prize had been awarded in this area.

CRSP's research was at the heart of the submission and the citation states,

*'The University's contribution to social policy, through high quality research, with a record of relevance, practical orientation and innovation, is an outstanding example of how excellence in research can be applied with wide impact and benefit. It has influenced policy makers and legislators in the UK resulting in better targeted policy, in particular as it affects neglected and disadvantaged groups.'*



THE QUEEN'S  
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES  
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION

2005



CRSP staff, past and present, at CRSP's 21st Conference in 2004.



Professor Robert Walker, ex CRSP Director, presents at CRSP's 21st Conference in 2004.



In 2005, CRSP staff with the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Loughborough University's contribution to Social Policy Research

## Professor Alan France became Director

In **2006** Bruce left CRSP to become Professor of Public Policy and Director of the Nottingham Policy Centre at Nottingham University. Professor Alan France became Director with Sue Middleton as Research Director. CRSP now had 18 permanent research staff with a support team of seven.

2006

The Centre combined its proven track record of producing a range of high quality research reports and presentations, tailored to the needs and requirements of its customers. It had a diverse range of sponsors including the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC), the European Commission, charitable research trusts, voluntary organisations and local authorities.

2007

## Framework Agreements

In **2007** we became approved contractors for the following Framework agreements:

- Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC);
- Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), including the Disability Lot;
- Department for Transport (DfT);
- HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC);
- Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

Alan has recently led the CRSP submission for the next RAE. In total over 80 per cent of CRSP's senior staff were included within the Department of Social Science's RAE submission which is nearly a 50 per cent increase on 2001.

## The Future ...

In **2008** CRSP celebrates 25 years of dynamic research in social policy. Despite its excellent past record we recognise that we face new challenges. As a result of changes in the senior management team and in line with the University's introduction of a ten year plan, 2008 commenced with a review of our research themes and the introduction of a new five year strategic plan to address the challenges ahead. As well as building on our current research Alan brings extensive knowledge and experience on research on the area of youth. Grahame Whitfield, who joined CRSP as Assistant Director in November 2007, will be expanding CRSP's research on disability related research with our other Assistant Director, Dr Janet Harvey concentrating on building on our expertise in the area of health and well-being.

Our new research themes are:

- Children, Families and the Life Course;
- Equality, Diversity and Citizenship;
- Health, Social Care and Well-being;
- Poverty and Social Exclusion;
- Work and Welfare.

CRSP also continues to be at the forefront of new methodologies in 2008, undertaking Social Network Analysis, and continuing to develop experience in longitudinal qualitative research methods.



Current CRSP staff 2008.

2008



# CRSP Projects over 25 Years

**Over the last 25 years CRSP have undertaken pioneering research in the field of social policy. To mark this occasion some of the many projects we have undertaken are listed below.**

Opportunities for Volunteering. 1983. Department of Health. **UK's first major national policy evaluation.**

Arts Activities in Prisons. 1989. Arts Council and the Home Office.

The Arts and Disability. 1990. The Shape Network.

Getting a FAIRDEAL for Disabled People. 1990. Department of Health.

Benefit Dynamics: Research using Department of Social Security Records. 1990. Department of Social Security.

The Arts in Special Hospitals. 1991. Special Hospitals Service Authority.

Quasi-Cohort Analysis of the Changing Financial Circumstances of Young People. 1990. Economic and Social Research Council.

The Arts in Ashworth Hospital. 1991. Special Hospitals Executive Authority.

Closure of Resettlement Units. 1991. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Diet Choice and Poverty. 1992. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Single Homeless People in Nottingham. 1993. Hostels Liaison Group.

Barriers to People Moving off Income Support. 1994. Department of Social Security (DSS). **Major DSS funded project.**

Small Fortunes: A National Survey of Expenditures on Children. 1994. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. **First Ever National Survey of Expenditure on Children.**

A New Civic Europe? (Eurovol Project). 1995. Volunteer Centre UK.

Evaluation of Earnings Top-Up. 1996. Department of Social Security. **The largest award funded by the Department of Social Security at the time.**

Analysing Family and Working Lives. 1996. Department of Social Security.

Confronting Unemployment: Families Management of Risk in a Flexible Labour Market. 1996. Economic and Social Research Council.

Workfare in International Perspective. 1997. European Union.

The Cost of Childhood Disabilities. 1997. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Saffron Food and Health. 1997. National Lottery Charities Board.

Agreeing Poverty Lines: Minimum Needs in Jersey. 1997. The States of Jersey.

Customer Contact with the Benefits Agency. 1997. Department of Social Security.

Long-term Unemployment and Social Exclusion in Germany, Sweden and Britain. 1997. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Small Expectations: Learning to be Poor? 1998. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Prince's Trust Volunteers: an Evaluation. 1998. The Prince's Trust.

Experimentation and the Evaluation of Social Security Policies. 1998. Department of Social Security.

New Deal for Disabled People: Personal Adviser Services. 1998. Department of Social Security.

Negotiating Transitions to Citizenship. 1999. Economic and Social Research Council.

Healthy Living Centres. 1999. Department of Health.

Jobseekers Allowance Evaluation: Unemployment and the New Benefit System. 1999. Department for Education and Employment, the Employment Services, the Department of Social Security and the Benefits Agency.

The Evaluation of the Education Maintenance Allowance. 1999. Department for Education and Employment.

The Causes of Long-term Rise in Welfare Benefit Reciprocity. 1999. The New Zealand Treasury.

The Cost of Childhood Disability. 1999. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Helping Disabled People in to Work. 2000. Department of Social Security.

Understanding the Impact of Jobseeker's Allowance. 2000. Department of Social Security.

The Poverty and Social Exclusion Survey of Britain. 2000. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

European Observatory on Social Security for Migrant Workers. 2000. European Union.

Welfare to Work: A Case for Evidence Based Policy Making. 2000. Economic and Social Research Council.

Traps and Springboards in European Minimum Income Standards. 2001. European Union and Belgian Government.

Budgetary Requirements for Disabled People in Jersey. 2001. Employment and Social Security Department of the States of Jersey.

Families with an Ill or Disabled Parent. 2001. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Flexibility, Social Security and the New Deal in Great Britain. 2001. Ministry for Employment, Social Issues, Qualifications and Technology of the German Land of North-Rhine Westphalia.

New Deal for Disabled People: National Extension. 2002. Department of Work and Pensions.

Assessing the Coverage Gap. 2002. International Social Security Association.

Analogue to Digital Switchover. 2002. Department of Trade and Industry.

Britain's Poorest Children, Severe and Persistent Poverty and Social Exclusion. 2002. Save the Children. **The first study conducted in Britain on Severe and Persistent Child Poverty and Social Exclusion.**

Minimum Income as the Social Protection of Last Resort: Safety Net, Trap and/or Springboard? 2002. European Commission.

Drugs and Alcohol Misuse as Barriers to Employment. 2002. Department for Work and Pensions.

Saffron Sure Start Local Evaluation. 2002. Saffron under 8's Forum.

Disability in the Workplace: Employers and Service Providers Responses to the Disability Discrimination Act in 2003 and preparation for 2004 changes. 2002. Department for Work and Pensions.

Evaluation of the New Opportunities for PE and Sport Programme. 2002. **The biggest evaluation commissioned by The Big Lottery Fund.**

Evaluation of Education Maintenance Allowance Pilots. 2003. Department for Education and Skills.

Jobcentre Plus Qualitative Evaluation. 2003. Department for Work and Pensions.

The Evaluation of the Adult Learning Grant. 2003. Department for Education and Skills.

Marriage in the 21st Century. 2003. Care for the Family.

Meta-analysis of United States Welfare to Work Programmes. 2003. US Department of Health and Human Sciences.

Navigating the E-Society: The Dynamics of Participation and Exclusion. 2004. Economic and Social Research Centre.

The Evaluation of Local Housing Allowance Pathfinders. 2004. Department for Work and Pensions.

Sure Start Loughborough East: Baseline Study of Parent's Views. 2004. NCH Action for Children.

Developing Budget Standards for Disabled People. 2004. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Developing an Income Support System for Jersey. 2004. States of Jersey.

Vehicle Safety Standards: Improving Car Crash Worthiness. 2004. Department for Transport.

Training and Reporting on European Social Sector (trESS). 2004. European Commission.

A Systematic Review of Poverty Dynamics. 2004. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Planning and Deploying Resources in Later Life – A Qualitative Study. 2005. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Social Fund: Current Role and Future Direction. 2005. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Britain's Poorest Children: Phase 2. 2005. Save the Children (UK).

A Child's-Eye View of Social Difference. 2006. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Public Sector and Equality for Disabled People. 2006. Department for Work and Pensions.

Link between HIV/Aids and Recent Fertility Patterns in Kenya. 2006. USAID, through MEASURE Evaluation, University of North Carolina.

Evidence Based Review on Mobility - Choices and Barriers for Different Social Groups. 2006. Department for Transport.

A Minimum Income Standard for Britain. 2006. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

Labour Market Impacts of New Tax Credits. 2006. Joseph Rowntree Foundation.

The Definition of Disability in the Workplace. 2007. Department for Work and Pensions, sub-contracted by Mathematica Policy Research Inc.

Tackling the Transport Barriers to Social Inclusion: the Potential of Individual Transport Budgets. 2007. Department for Transport.

National Youth Agency Briefing Papers. 2007. National Youth Agency.

“ I started CRSP at a time of great challenge as the University was then seeking to cut back the Department to leave a tiny Social Policy core. However, with the HE Sector just beginning to move into the Research Assessment Exercise era I could see the longer term benefits of commitment to research so had the conviction to keep pushing. It was a survival strategy which became a success story and has now become a superb ‘institution’! ”

Professor Sir Adrian Webb  
Founder of CRSP

“ Throughout my 15 years as Head of Social Sciences (1991-2006) the development and reputation of CRSP were among the department’s many successes of which I was most proud. The award of the Queen’s Anniversary Prize for 2005 was due recognition that CRSP had become the country’s leading university centre for research in social policy, with an influence on public debate and policy, and a reputation for expertise, rigour, and excellence that are unparalleled. ”

Professor Peter Golding  
Pro Vice Chancellor for Research, Loughborough University

“ CRSP is always ahead of the wave. It led the way on poverty and welfare dynamics, child poverty, consensual minimum income standards, welfare to work policies, employment advancement, mixed methods research and policy evaluation. And it will continue to do so. ”

Professor Robert Walker  
CRSP Director 1990-2000

“ CRSP has made a significant contribution to UK applied social policy. Policy makers and those charged with delivering public services need research centres like CRSP if they are to be successful in achieving their objectives. ”

Professor Bruce Stafford  
CRSP Director and staff member 1996-2006

“ CRSP’s strengths are based upon a highly skilled and professional staff on permanent contracts committed to producing policy-relevant research of the highest standard. Up to date policy knowledge and methodological range and rigour are underpinned by an expert administrative and support team. All is underwritten by an ethos of collective purpose. ”

Dr Simon Roberts  
CRSP Assistant Director and staff member 1998-2007

“ I spent over 12 years at CRSP, starting off as a Research Assistant and ending up as Assistant Director. It really was an exciting place to be and a great way to develop a career in social research through working alongside other excellent researchers and under the guidance of Robert Walker, then Bruce Stafford and Sue Middleton. It was a very hard decision to leave, but strong links remain - not least through a number of joint ventures between CRSP and BMG Research! ”

Karen Kellard  
CRSP Assistant Director and staff member 1993-2006

“ What can I say about my 17 years as a researcher at CRSP, first as a Research Fellow and later as Assistant Director. It was certainly a challenge, not knowing from where or when the next project would be commissioned, but this was also part of the excitement of working in a Centre so widely acclaimed for its expertise and innovative work. Despite the uncertainties and the difficulties of juggling multiple tasks it was also a brilliant place to be and never boring. The camaraderie and unflinching support of colleagues at all levels was particularly appreciated. Above all, and long before the rest of the world caught up, the Centre and its host institution recognised the intrinsic value of career researchers and research as a career. A value it still holds dear today. ”

Dr Jill Vincent  
CRSP Assistant Director and staff member 1983-2000