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## ***Session 2***

# **Poverty: The wallpaper of social work practice**

**1 September 10:30 - 12:00**

**MS Teams**

# Welcome


Sarah McMillan  
Professional Officer, SASW



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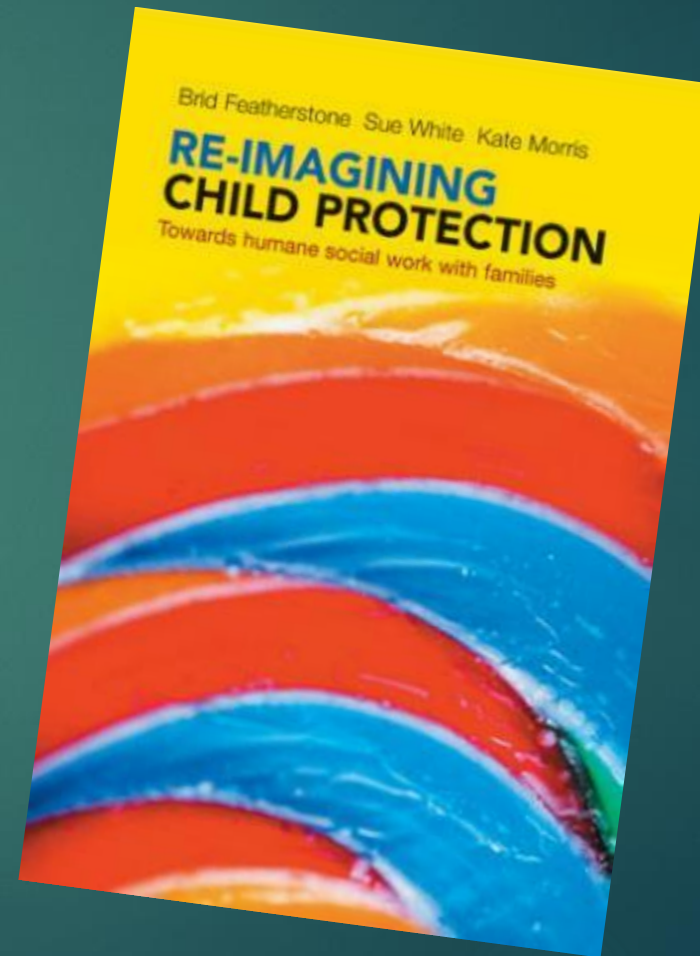
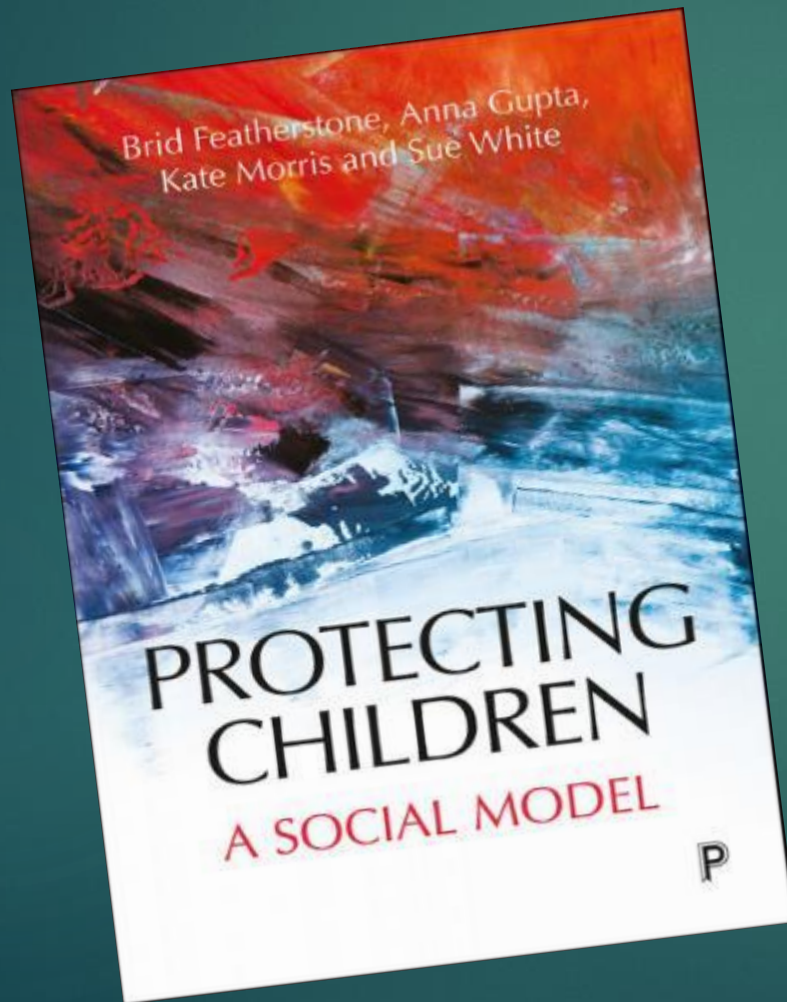
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# Towards a *Social Model*: It's a bumpy road

PROFESSOR BRID FEATHERSTONE AND PROFESSOR KATE MORRIS

# Thinking differently – contributions to a conversation:





# Child Welfare Inequalities Project (CWIP)



## Key components:

- ▶ Review of the association between poverty and Child Abuse and Neglect.
- ▶ Examination of the relationship between CPP or LAC rates with area level measures of deprivation (UK).
- ▶ Mixed methods case studies exploring the interplay between family circumstances and social work decision making.

# Key headlines from the study's analysis of quantitative data

- ▶ A social gradient in children's chances of an intervention, not a divide between families in poverty and the rest.
- ▶ Each 10% increase in neighbourhood deprivation brings a 30% increase in LAC and CPP rates.
- ▶ Money matters:
  - For families: increasing levels of child poverty and therefore family poverty.
  - For practitioners: all LAs experiencing reduced funding, those with highest demand and highest deprivation have taken the hardest hit.
  - For performance: statistically significant link between Ofsted ranking and deprivation level (at LA level).

# Practice and Poverty

- Our CWIP analysis suggest that existing frameworks cannot address the core issues for families. There is a need to reconnect with this and pay attention to the structural context that bear upon families
- Social workers don't see anti poverty activity as 'core business' – they say they focus on risk / parenting and that others should be addressing issues of deprivation (food, warmth, shelter)
- Poverty as 'too big to tackle' in a context of ever diminishing resources
- The availability of services shape and constrain social work analysis
- In their attempts to practice equitably, some social workers consciously disengaged with the social and spatial distribution of social work demand
- Some systems and practices can reinforce the shame and suffering of poverty for family members



*‘We also do a lot of signposting families to foodbanks, or we can issue foodbank vouchers. But we tend, if we can, we are more than fully committed doing what we would consider our core business, which is doing parenting skills, parenting capacity change type of things. And this other stuff, whilst in a perfect world we should be doing it, and doing it with family, the reality is that the work load people would say "you need to be doing other things, getting other people to do that sort of thing for them, you can't, you haven't got the capacity and if you do it, you run the risk of drowning”*

# Lessons from this pandemic

**Far from the great leveller, mortality from COVID-19 follows the social gradient. COVID-19, of course, is caused by a virus. But the ‘causes of the causes’ are the same social conditions that give rise to the social gradient in health, more generally (Michael Marmot)...**

[Build Back Fairer: The COVID-19 Marmot Review | The Health Foundation](#)

A public health approach ... do not focus on individualised risk factors

# How have we been living?

*We are not all in the same boat. We are all in the same storm. Some are on super-yachts. Some have just the one oar*

**Damian Barr (@Damian\_Barr)** [April 21, 2020](#)

A housing crisis that has been 30 years in the making

Digital inequalities

Access to SSP



# Have we got our **values** wrong?

- ▶ Consider three paradoxes of value. Great minds from Plato to Adam Smith have pondered why water, which is essential for life, is virtually free, but diamonds, which have limited utility beyond their beauty, are so expensive.
- ▶ Why do financial markets rate Amazon as one of the world's most valuable companies, but the value of the vast region of the Amazon appears on no ledger until it's stripped of its foliage and converted into farmland?
- ▶ And how can we reconcile our celebrations of the extraordinary values of public service dedication and the heroism of healthcare workers with their low wages and perilous working conditions? (Carney, 2020)

# Those advocating change...

- ▶ 'Build back fairer'
- ▶ Attend to the 'causes of the causes'
- ▶ Develop a new social settlement – a new framework recognizing our interdependence, our need to care and be cared-for, participate in decisions affecting us, develop services together



# Darren McGarvey



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# Discussion & question time



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# Summary & thanks

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