

Launched in 2025, the Institute is the UK’s very first ‘think and do’ centre solely dedicated to advancing the life chances of children and young people, both at home and internationally, and committed to turning insight into impact in both policy and practice.

It incorporates Coram’s existing portfolio of research activity and has at its heart the views and experiences gained from delivering to hundreds of thousands of children and young people, informed by our experience as the country’s first and longest continuing children’s charity since being established as the Foundling Hospital in 1739.

Young people’s voice in research

At the heart of the Institute’s research strategy is participatory research with children using a variety of methods to ensure the inclusion of the child’s voice. They develop opportunities for youth peer researchers and early career researchers to develop skills and conduct relevant, impactful research. One example of this commitment is in the involvement of peer researchers in a large-scale efficacy trial.

Since April 2024, the Coram Institute team has run a large-scale randomised controlled trial (RCT) for the Youth Endowment Fund of a 12-month restorative mentoring programme for young people aged 11 to 17 at risk of offending and involvement in youth violence.

Central to the trial is a participatory approach to ground the research in lived experience of the youth justice system. Their approach places young people, who have faced similar challenges to those faced by participants, at the heart of an efficacy trial through use of an embedded peer researcher programme. Their team of six paid peer researchers, aged 18 to 25, is the first point of contact for participants referred to the trial. Peer researchers receive a comprehensive training programme and ongoing supervision from the Coram Institute for Children.

Each peer researcher plays a pivotal role by explaining the RCT, gathering informed consent and supporting the young person to complete a set of measures about sensitive topics. We believe including peer researchers is a unique and innovative way to run a RCT in social research settings, enabling meaningful participation and producing credible findings. As one young person told them:

“I answered all the questions honestly, like when they said ‘have you carried a knife in the past 6 months?’, like, I would either say ‘I have’ or I would say ‘yeah’ ... it’s easy to admit to things to them [peer researchers].”

Children and Young People with Experience of Care Fellowships

In partnership with the Churchill Fellowship and the Hadley Trust

The Churchill Fellowship is a national network of 4,000 dynamic individuals who are inspiring change in every area of UK life. They come from all parts of society and are united by a common mission: to develop new solutions for today’s key challenges, based on learning from the world.

Each year, over 100 Churchill Fellows are funded to discover new ideas and best practice overseas in any practical issue they care passionately about, anywhere in the world. They meet leading practitioners, engage with cutting-edge projects and create a report on their findings.

In 2022, the Churchill Fellowship launched a three-year programme of Fellowships focused on Children and Young People with Experience of Care. This Fellowship theme is focused on improving the lives and outcomes of children and young people with experience of care.

This programme offers individuals the opportunity to discover new ideas and best practice from around the world and will support them to apply that learning and inspire change in children’s social care in the UK. Coram is acting as a knowledge partner, supporting the Fellows’ research and its dissemination, and the programme is co-funded by the Hadley Trust.

The 2025 cohort includes:

Anita Chiverton: Anita’s fellowship will explore the impact of the built environment on the mental health of care-experienced children and young people. Anita will travel to the USA and several countries in Europe to learn more about how environmental factors can help healing from trauma.

Caragh Arthur: Caragh’s fellowship aims to build a nationally-recognised framework in the UK to rebuild trust between services and women care-leavers who are at high risk of incarceration, domestic violence, and addiction. She will travel to Germany and Switzerland

Clare Holdsworth: Clare’s fellowship – based on travel to Australia, New Zealand and Canada – aims to create a best practice model to create paid employment for young people with care experience to do impactful voice, influence and change work.



Eona Craig: Eona’s fellowship aims to improve how and where the arts and culture sit in the portfolio of services offered to care experienced young people in Scotland. Based on research in New Zealand and Australia, Eona will examine arts-based approaches that tackle exclusion, stigma, discrimination and poverty, while also nurturing the amazing potential of children and their families to self-start, self-direct and self-actualise.

Grant Trainer: Grant’s fellowship aims to explore how policing and public services in Scotland can better respect the rights, voices and lived experiences of people with experience of care. It will explore practical, trauma-informed approaches in the USA and New Zealand that will enhance responsiveness, empathy and effectiveness in Scotland.

Kielly Arbuthnot: Kielly’s fellowship focuses on improving approaches to life story work for care-experienced children and young people. Inspired by best practice in Australia and the USA, Kielly aims to create a programme for use by local authorities which mobilises the network around a child to deliver appropriate life story work as well as to record and celebrate the child’s life during their time in care.

Laura Lacey: Laura’s fellowship, based on travel to Canada and Finland, aims to break the cycle for children who go missing from care, with a plan to devise a blueprint for services to work more effectively with these children and young people in the future.

Rachel Cole: Rachel’s work will look at how to improve outcomes for Black children in care through culturally-responsive mentorship models to develop a mentorship initiative as part of a new framework for Black and minority children in foster care, where mentors provide long-term, culturally sensitive support.

Scott Darraugh: Scott’s fellowship will explore how community-led models of foster care - like Together California’s ‘Our Village’ in the USA - can create stronger, more loving systems of support for children in care.

Terri-Anne Hamer: Terri-Anne’s fellowship, based on travel to Italy, USA and Greece, will explore trauma-informed support for care-experienced parents. It aims to reduce unnecessary child removals and to help these parents understand how their own trauma may affect their parenting journey.

Tiegan Boyens: Tiegan’s fellowship will explore ideas that promote connection and understanding in adoption to minimise negative outcomes. Based on research in Europe and Australia, Tiegan’s work will explore innovative, therapeutic approaches to adoption that support meaningful connections.

[View related resources from the Children and Young People with Experience of Care Fellowships here.](#)