

Inspiring Children's Futures

Doctoral Research Centre

Achieving the well-being of children in the COVID-19 Recovery Decade: Responding to children's distinct needs, and realising their full range of rights and opportunities.



Programme Type:

PhD Education or
PhD in Economics or
PhD Law or
PhD in Social Work and Social Policy or
PhD in Politics

Programme Overview:

The Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures Doctoral Research Centre (DRC) is focussing unwaveringly on 'Achieving the Well-being of Children in the COVID-19 Recovery Decade'.

Driven by the UN Sustainable Development Goals, this DRC aims to generate new knowledge, and apply this effectively in policy, professional practice environments, and the settings in which children live their lives. It will contribute to improving the global challenge of responding to children's needs, and realising their full range of rights and opportunities, ultimately to achieve peaceful, just and inclusive societies for all (SDG 16).

This applied, real-world impact is a bold aim, and achieved through collaborative, multi-sectoral internal and external partnerships, both within the UK and internationally.

The following Principles underpin the DRC's Work Programme:

- Founded in the global frameworks of: the **UN Agenda 2030 and the SDGs**, and notably SDG 16; the **UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC)**; and the **Justice for Children, Justice for All Ten Challenges**;
- Grounded in a sound theoretical and conceptual framework; based on data and evidence; and providing real world applied insights and value;
- Informed by, and contributing to, global experience and knowledge;
- Contributing to the effective implementation of programmes to advance the well-being of children;
- Embracing participatory and partnership elements.

The DRC will hold several key Attributes:

- The DRC draws together world-class scholars to study across disciplines, on complex problems that require the insights from multiple perspectives;
- It is multi-disciplinary, with doctoral students working together on common questions as a mutually supportive and joint cluster of PhDs;
- It's explicitly advances the University vision to promote cross-University collective scholarship, by building on the immense potential for joint engagement and for the joint analysis of the critical societal challenges;
- DRC Doctoral students engage in the global challenge questions of how best to realise SDG 16, and in particular children's well-being, around the world;
- They also draw together those across the campus who are working to achieve children's well-being from multiple perspectives, learning from each other and sparking innovations and ideas;
- The research themes are drawn together to form a complementary and coherent set of studentships' research questions; that is, the overall Research Programme explicitly reflects the highly integrated and dependent nature of the children's well-being, economic and governance perspectives, and the criticality of bringing these perspectives together in a coherent focussed manner.
- Supervision is collectively undertaken, with both a systematic supervision of each individual, as well as a less formal supervision of the cluster as a whole, drawing on a broader set of experts from both the academic and practitioner worlds. These include academic experts and individuals with experience of real-world policy and implementation.



The Research Programme:

The DRC focuses on children who experience the greatest marginalisation. This is based on the imperative of the UN Agenda 2030 vision, that is, that no child should be left behind, and that those furthest behind should be addressed first.

The DRC captures multiple themes:

From the perspective of **children’s rights and well-being** there are four broad themes:

- **Children in Contact with the Law**
- **Children in Alternative Care**
- **Children Experiencing Family Poverty**
- **Children Experiencing Family Violence**

From the **economic perspective**, there are three broad themes:

- **The Economic Determinants of Children’s Vulnerability and Well-being**
- **The Returns to Investing in Children’s Well-being: Understanding the societal and personal net value**
- **The Economic and Political Challenges to Effective Implementation**

A further complementary theme of sustained **Governance and Public Policy Implementation** is explored as mechanisms for real world impact.

In principle, the research themes that make up the overall Research Programme of the DRC could be drawn from any cell of this diagram, or indeed embrace several cells:

Children’s Rights and Well-being Dimensions

Children in Contact with the Law				
Children in Alternative Care				
Children Experiencing Family Poverty				
Children Experiencing Family Violence				
	Economic Determinants of Children’s Vulnerability and Well-being	Returns to investing in Children’s Well-being	Economic and Political Challenges to Effective Implementation	Governance and Public Policy Implementation Approaches’

Economic and Governance Dimensions



Dimensions:

These themes are considered in relation to dimensions that reflect the potential 'well-being journey' of a child, namely:

- **Preventative factors: Anticipating the future**
- **Mitigative factors: Enhancing the present**
- **Responsive factors: Enhancing the future**

We welcome proposals for projects from applicants interested in the specific focus of the Research Programme set out above, and with suitable qualifications. We especially welcome interdisciplinary projects that bring together these disciplines.

We invite **self-funding** applicants to propose a 3pg research project proposal, including the research analysis that these questions might constitute, and that align with the Principles, Attributes, Themes, Dimensions and Focus of this DRC.

Periodically, **fully-funded** studentships become available and advertised. We invite applicants for these studentships to propose a 3pg research project proposal which is focused on the advertised research questions.

Engagement with External Partners:

Our studentships are taken forward in partnership with organisations such as:

The **Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD)**, is an international organisation that works to build better policies for better lives. The work of the Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures engages with the OECD WISE (Well-Being, Inclusion, Sustainability and Equal Opportunity) Centre, with possibilities of collaboration and Paris-based links.

Through the 'Justice for Children, Justice for All' project, the **Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures** works closely with the **Pathfinders for Peace, Just and Inclusive Societies**. DRC students may engage with their aims and work, based in New York, hosted by NYU and aligned with the United Nations agenda.

Illustrative Examples of Research Questions:

To guide applicants, the following are illustrations of the sort of questions that would be appropriate from the children's rights and well-being perspective, as set out above. The illustrations highlight the manner in which the economic perspectives, could also be integrated into the research proposals.

A core set of questions could apply to each of the themes:

- What are the early common trajectories of children who subsequently are deemed the focus of this theme? To what extent and in what ways are these common/ differ across countries?
- What are the critical moments in a child's journey, in which families and public services have the greatest opportunity to enable these children to diverge from the trajectory into adversity?
- Which economic elements and processes are at play in these trajectories? How and why do these processes work?
- What is the return on investment in preventative / mitigative / responsive interventions for both the individual child and for the wider society? What are the applied lessons for public services and policies?





- How might these complex trajectories be addressed through policy? What are the implications of these findings for public services and national policies?
- What are the economic and political challenges to effective and sustainable implementation of policy? What mechanisms can be applied across government and society to enable a coherent and sustained implementation of these most effective policies? How might these implementation mechanisms be applied to make a daily felt difference in children's lives?
- In what ways might participative methodologies with children, families, practitioners, policymakers, inform these research questions?

Funding

Self-funding applicants are invited to apply at any time.

Fully-funded DRC studentships are advertised when available. These studentships cover Home (UK) fees, and a stipend for living costs of circa £15,285 (full time) per annum for the duration of 3 years.

Eligibility

Prospective applicants should:

- 1) Hold a strong undergraduate degree in a relevant discipline at 2:1 (or equivalent) or better;
- 2) Hold a Masters' degree (or equivalent) in a broadly relevant discipline (for Economics Doctoral applicants, this includes the following core classes: microeconomics, macroeconomics, econometrics, a dissertation and a range of relevant options);
- 3) Demonstrate an interest in, and knowledge of, a global outlook and a real world impact for children.
- 4) Demonstrate the ability to undertake independent research;
- 5) Have an interest in acquiring and/or further developing skills in translation of research into policy.

Additionally, candidates who are not native English speakers will be required to provide evidence for their English skills (such as by IELTS or similar tests approved by UKVI, or a degree completed in an English speaking country).

How applicants can apply

We invite **self-funding** applicants to propose a 3pg research proposal that aligns with the Principles, Attributes, Themes, Dimensions and Focus of this DRC, including the research analysis that these questions might constitute.

Likewise, when available, we also invite applicants for **fully-funded** studentships to propose a 3pg research project proposal. These funded studentships will have an advertised focus on specific research questions.

For informal enquiries in the first instance, please contact Professor Jennifer Davidson (iicf-hello@strath.ac.uk).

The following individuals will inform the selection:

Prof Jennifer Davidson, Institute for Inspiring Children's Futures
<https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/persons/jennifer-davidson>

Dr Fabrizio de Francesco, School of Government and Public Policy
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/romitiagnesedr/>

Prof Andrew Goudie, Special Adviser to the Principal and Chair, Fraser of Allander Institute
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/goudieandrewprof/>

Prof Marion Henderson, Social Work and Social Policy
<https://pureportal.strath.ac.uk/en/persons/marion-henderson>

Prof Claire McDiarmid, School of Law
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/mcdiarmidclairedr/>

Dr Agnese Romiti, School of Economics
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/romitiagnesedr/>

Dr Edward Sosu, School of Education
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/sosuedwarddr/>

Ms Nina Vaswani, CYCJ
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/staff/vaswanininams/>

Pending the research questions of the successful candidates, the PhD Supervisors may be amongst this panel, from amongst other Strathclyde staff, and from other institutions.

The Humanities and Social Sciences Graduate School:

The student will also be part of a vibrant postgraduate community of over 300 students across six Schools, many international, who have a dedicated work space in our Graduate School. The Graduate School provides support with research training, organizes regular events for students and runs a mentoring scheme for new students.

More information on the Graduate School is available here:
<https://www.strath.ac.uk/humanities/graduateschool/>

