

## Professor Sue White

Professor of Social Work (Children and Families)

Applied Social Studies

### Contact details

**Telephone** [+44\(0\)121 414 5714](tel:+44(0)121 414 5714) (tel:+44 121 414 5714)

**Email** [s.white.3@bham.ac.uk](mailto:s.white.3@bham.ac.uk) (mailto:s.white.3@bham.ac.uk)

School of Social Policy, IASS  
Muirhead Tower, Room 845  
University of Birmingham  
Edgbaston  
Birmingham  
B15 2TT, United Kingdom



### About

Sue is Professor of Social Work for Children and Families in the School of Social Policy, Institute of Applied Social Studies. She is also an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences.

### Qualifications

- PhD Performing Social Work: An Ethnographic Study of Talk and Text in a Metropolitan Social Services Department (Salford, Sociology) - 1997
- MA Sociology (Salford) - 1993
- PG Diploma Applied Social Studies and Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (Leeds) - 1984
- BSc (Hons) Sociology/Politics (Bradford) - 1982

### Biography

Sue qualified in social work at the University of Leeds in 1984. She worked as local authority social worker and manager, mainly in statutory child care, until 1995, when following doctoral studies, she moved to an academic post at the University of Manchester, leaving in 2002 to become Professor of Health and Social Care at the University of Huddersfield and in January 2007, Professor of Social Work at Lancaster. Sue joined the Institute for Applied Social Studies, at the University of Birmingham in August 2010

For the past two years Sue has been involved in the social work reform process in England. She served on the Social Work Task Force, was a member of the College of Social Work Development Group and the Social Work Reform Board. She is currently a member of reference group for the Munro Review of child protection services in England.

Sue is currently Chair of the Association of Professors of Social Work and Editor in Chief of Child and Family Social Work, <http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1356-750> (<http://www.wiley.com/bw/journal.asp?ref=1356-7500>)

### Teaching

Sue's teaching is very much informed by her ethnographic and discourse analytic research into professional sense-making. Over the years she has taught on a wide range of courses, including qualitative research methods, law for social workers, research for and as practice, reflexive practice and child and family social work. Her current teaching is informed by a particular orientation to knowledge for social work which stresses the active and critical engagement of students in what they are being taught.

### Research

Sue's primary research interest is in the sociological analysis of professional judgement and decision-making with an emphasis on understanding how science, formal knowledge, rhetoric, moral judgement, emotion and subjectivity interact in professional practice, particularly in child health and welfare. Her research has focused principally on the analysis of professional talk in a range of health and welfare settings. However, she has also undertaken evaluative and applied research for central and local government, NHS and non-statutory organizations. Sue's most recent Economic and Social Research Council projects, 2004-2006 (Tracking Children and Accomplishing Risk: e-Assessment Systems in Child Welfare, ESRC e-Society Programme, graded Outstanding) and 2006-2009 (Error Blame and Responsibility: The Problematics of Governance in an Invisible Trade, ESRC Public Services Programme, graded Outstanding) have been influential in informing policy developments and the reform of social work. They have also aroused her interest in socio-technical systems design. You can find details of these projects on the ESRC Society Today site <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx> (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/ESRCInfoCentre/index.aspx>)

Sue is interested in hearing from prospective PhD students in the following areas:

- Discourse analytic or ethnographic studies of professional practice
- Human factors/technology and professional practice
- Child welfare, child health, safeguarding/child protection
- Interprofessional practice
- Professional Judgement

### Publications

#### Academic Journal Papers

Wastell, D. White, S., Broadhurst, K., Hall, C., Peckover, S. & Pithouse, A. (2010) Children's services in the iron cage of performance management: street level

Hall, C.; Parton, N; Peckover, S. and White, S. (2010) Child-centric ICTs and the fragmentation of child welfare practice in England, *Journal of Social Policy*. 39, 3, 393–413

White, S.; Wastell, D.; Broadhurst, K and Hall, C. (2010) When policy o'erleaps itself: the tragic tale of the Integrated Children's System, *Critical Social Policy* 30: 405-429

Broadhurst, K., Hall, C., Pithouse., A., Peckover., S. White., S. and Wastell, D (2010) Risk, instrumentalism and the humane project – identifying the informal logics of risk management in children's statutory services *British Journal of Social Work* Special Issue Advance Access published February 1, 2010

White, S.; Wastell, D.; Broadhurst, K.; Hall, C; Peckover, S.; Pithouse, A. (2009) Whither practice-near research in the modernization programme? Policy blunders in children's services, *Journal of Social Work Practice: Psychotherapeutic Approaches in Health, Welfare and the Community*, Volume 23 Issue 4, 401.

Pithouse A., Hall C., Peckover S., & White S. (advance access 2009). A Tale of Two CAFs: The Impact of the Electronic Common Assessment Framework. *British Journal of Social Work* Advance Access published on February 25, 2009. doi:10.1093/bjsw/bcp020

Broadhurst, K.; Wastell, D; White, S; Hall, C; Peckover, S; Thompson, K.; Pithouse, A and Davey D. (advance access 2009) Performing 'Initial Assessment': Identifying the Latent Conditions for Error at the Front-Door of Local Authority Children's Services, *British Journal of Social Work* Advance Access published 18 January

White, S. (2009) 'Fabled Uncertainty in Social Work: A Coda to Spafford et al.', *Journal of Social Work*, 9, 2: 222-235

#### Edited Works: Contributions

Featherstone, B, White, S and Morris, K (forthcoming 2014), *Re-imagining Child Protection: Towards humane social work with families*, Bristol: Policy Press.

White, S. and Wastell, D. (forthcoming 2011) Theoretical vocabularies and moral negotiation in child welfare: The saga of Evie and Seb; *Handbook of Communication in Organisations and Professions* In C. Candlin and S. Sarangi, *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics*, Mouton de Gruyter

Wastell, D. and White, S. (2010) Technology as Magic: Fetish and Folly in the IT-enabled Reform of Children's Services, in P. Ayre and M. Preston-Shoot, *Children's Services at the Crossroads*, Lyme Regis: Russell House

**[Follow this link for further publications by Sue White \(pdf; 90KB; opens in new window\).](#)** ([/Documents/college-social-sciences/social-policy/Publications-IASS/white-sue-publications.pdf](#))

## Expertise

Social work with children and families; child abuse and neglect; child protection; professional decision-making; sociotechnical systems design; sociology of the professions; ethnography

Alternative contact number available for this expert: **[contact the press office \(http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx\)](http://www.birmingham.ac.uk/news/contacts/index.aspx)**

---

[Privacy](#) | [Legal](#) | [Cookies and cookie policy](#) | [Accessibility](#) | [Site map](#) | [Website feedback](#) | [Charitable information](#)

© University of Birmingham 2015

