

CHAMPIONS Project

Children in Homeless Accommodations Managing Pandemic Invisibility Or Non-inclusive Strategies

A national study assessing the true impact of COVID-19 on children under-five living in temporary accommodation or experiencing homelessness.

www.championsproject.co.uk



Study Location: **England**
Duration: **18 Months**

champions@ucl.ac.uk

Project PI: Prof. Monica Lakhanpaul | m.lakhanpaul@ucl.ac.uk | [@ProfLakhanpaul](https://twitter.com/ProfLakhanpaul)

Project

Partners:

- British Association for Community Child Health
- Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health
- Ekam Foundation
- The Children's Society

Lead Organisations:

Implementation Partners:

Funders:



Economic and Social Research Council

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Experiencing homelessness as a child is difficult enough: it affects physical and emotional wellbeing and increases the risk of common childhood illnesses and health problems later in life. COVID-19 has impacted these children and their families harder than most, yet many vital children's health, education and social support services have been suspended, further hampering their development.

Living in temporary accommodation (TA) due to experiencing homelessness makes it difficult or impossible to follow national public health guidelines like social distancing, self-isolation and frequent hand washing, due to overcrowding and shared facilities. These guidelines also may not be culturally appropriate or accessible, especially for the disproportionately Black and Minority Ethnic homeless population.

The CHAMPIONS team, led by Professor Monica Lakhanpaul, is exploring how best to reach and help children in TA and their families, and is working in partnership with them to co-develop strategies addressing the health and wellbeing impacts of COVID-19 in the short- and long-term. The project's digital knowledge exchange platform will host experiences of families in TA as well as tailored public health messages and briefings for policymakers and health and care professionals.

The diverse, interdisciplinary research team includes expertise in co-producing strategies across sectors including child public health, economics, epidemiology, inclusion health, built environments, mental health, digital innovation and public engagement.

The Co-lead is Diana Margot Rosenthal. Co-investigators include Professor Raghu Raghavan, Dr Marcella Ucci, Dr Nadzeya Svirydzenka, Dr Michelle Heys, Professor Robert Aldridge, Professor Paula Lorgelly, Dr Kaushik Sarkar and Professor Sushma Acquilla. Supported by Dr Sorcha Mahony of The Children's Society and Dr Kartik Sharma of PAHUS. The research team includes Dr Kriss Fearon, Dr Margarita Garfias Royo, Safya Benniche and Matt Williams. The students associated with the project are Daniela Cossio Martinez, Gema Milla De La Feunte, Rosemary Roberts, Arunima Shreshtha, Jungyuan Sun, Christen van den Berghe and Priyam Deka.

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Research Objectives

1. Scoping Review:

We are examining public health projects around the world to identify effective strategies for reaching marginalised and excluded children under-5 and for improving their access to and use of early child health programmes. We are also drawing on lived experiences from low- and middle-income countries and interviews with experts. This will help us to develop tailored solutions suitable for use in England.

2. Needs Analysis:

We are partnering with children and families experiencing homelessness and living in temporary accommodation (TA) to explore the effect COVID-19 has had on them and what their public health needs are. We are conducting a survey and interviews in England, and we also invite people to submit their own photographs and stories as we want the outcome to be informed by citizen science. At the end of this, we will produce a needs analysis report.

3. Feasibility Study:

We are working with health and care professionals that support families living in TA to understand families' needs from their perspective. Findings from interviews and a survey with professionals working for the NHS, local authorities, charities and other groups that support families living in TA with young children will help develop strategic interventions that work in practice.

4. Knowledge Exchange:

Throughout the project, and after, we will be sharing what we are learning from those who have experienced TA during COVID: this work is central to the CHAMPIONS project. Our knowledge exchange platform has been designed with help from families, professionals and other stakeholders. Here we will host lived experiences of TA, research findings, recommendations, and tailored public health messages.

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Implementation Partners:



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CHAMPIONS Team

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Project PI:



Professor Monica Lakhanpaul
Principal Investigator and Professor
Integrated Community Child Health
Pro-Vice-Provost (South Asia)
Honorary Consultant Paediatrician
UCL Great Ormond Street Institute of Child Health

PhD Student:



Diana Margot Rosenthal, MPA, MSc
PhD Student
Project Co-Lead (until March'21)
UCL Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health

Co- Investigators



Professor Sushma Acquilla
Vice-Chair, Global Health Committee
Faculty of Public Health, UK



Professor Robert Aldridge
Public Health Data Science
UCL Institute of Health Informatics



Dr Michelle Heys
Clinical Associate Professor
Honorary Consultant
UCL Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health



Professor Paula Lorgelly
Health Economics
UCL Department
of Applied Health Research



Professor Raghu Raghavan
Mental Health
DMU Mary Seacole Research Centre



Dr Nadia Svirydzenka
Senior Lecturer in Psychology
DMU Mary Seacole Research Centre
School of Applied Social Sciences



Dr Marcella Ucci
Assoc. Professor, Environmental
and Healthy Buildings
UCL Institute for Environmental
Design and Engineering,
Bartlett Faculty of the Built
Environment

Creative Advisor



Dr Kartik Sharma
Founder
Public Arts Health & Us (PAHUS)



Dr Sorcha Mahony
Senior Researcher
The Children's Society



Dr Margarita Garfias Royo
Research Fellow
UCL Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health

Matt Williams
Research Assistant
UCL Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health



Dr Kriss Fearon
Research Fellow
DMU Mary Seacole Research Centre



Dr Kaushik Sarkar
Evidence-Based Medicine Lead
Malaria No More



Safya Benniche
Research Assistant
UCL Great Ormond Street
Institute of Child Health

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