

# 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](http://www.championsproject.co.uk)



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

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Project PI: Prof. Monica Lakhanpaul | [m.lakhanpaul@ucl.ac.uk](mailto: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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# 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

**Knowledge Co-Lead:**



**Diana Margot Rosenthal, MPA, MSc**  
PhD Student and Early Career Researcher  
Project Co-Lead (until 06/2021)  
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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