



## UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE)

### Impact report 2023/2024



**Susana Castro-Kemp**  
**Dean Crow**  
**Gergo Bartl**  
**Dora Kokosi**

## Message from the Director



In September 2023, I started the role of Director of the UCL Centre for Inclusive Education (CIE) and took on the mission of transforming the centre. There is a lot of work to be done, but I am delighted to see what we, as a new team, have accomplished already over the past year. A new 5-year strategy has been devised, resulting from consultation with colleagues in the Department of Psychology and Human Development (PHD) at UCL, and the IOE more widely, as well as from the analysis of national and international centres operating in a similar space. We have very clearly found our feet. We are a global centre for research and knowledge exchange in Inclusive Education, but a unique one: our research is pragmatic, impact-driven and uses a range of methodologies, from qualitative approaches with an interpretative *ethos*, to high-level quantitative studies, including those with secondary data. We do primary research as well as systematic reviews, we engage in participatory and creative methodologies, and we value theoretical positioning. We do not limit the potential for impact and reach of our research by excluding certain methods or approaches, we actively look for the needed expertise in our diverse team of researchers to answer societal questions that can support inclusion in education, across frontiers, phases of education, types of need and areas of life. This is only possible because our members are world-leading researchers in a wide range of methods, all relevant for supporting inclusive education in a variety of ways.

This report outlines and celebrates (only some of) our successes achieved in 2023/24. We have the people, the processes and the ideas to continue growing and we look forward to continuing sharing our work over the next 4 years.

I am particularly proud of the global work that we do and this report clearly showcases the many partnerships we have established so far, nationally and internationally.

Thank you to *all* CIE members and core team, without whom no strategy could result in real change.

Dr Susana Castro-Kemp  
Associate Professor in Psychology and Human Development

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S. Castro-Kemp'.

## Five-year strategy

1. As part of its transformation, **CIE now has a new 5-year strategy** which outlines our mission, values, goals and performance indicators. This will allow us to track our progress, including successes and areas for improvement. Each year we will produce a report showcasing performance against this strategy. You can consult the brief strategy document on our new website (to be released in late 2024). Our four strategic priorities are 1. Research, 2. Evidence-based knowledge exchange, 3. Public engagement and 4. Financial sustainability.
2. A new deputy director has been appointed, [Dr Miriam McBreen](#). Miriam is an early career researcher and an expert in reading motivation and inclusive practice, particularly with single-case designs. She brings a wealth of experience to CIE, including international links and an in-depth knowledge of consultancy work. [Dr Gergo Bartl](#) is Acting Deputy Director until January 2025, replacing Miriam on her sabbatical leave. We thank the outgoing Deputy Director [Dr Amelia Roberts](#) for her contributions and ongoing work in this field for several years.
3. As part of our quality assurance procedures, **we have set up an Advisory Board**, which comprises members of all interested parties in the field of Inclusive education: academics, parents/caregivers, people with disability and SEND/neurodivergence, practitioners, policy makers and policy advisors:

Prof. Tim O'Brien (Chair of Board), Honorary Professor, UCL Institute of Education, UK and University of Limerick, Mary Immaculate College, Ireland

Dr Johanna Fitzgerald, National Inclusion, Special Education and Research Coordinator, Education and Training Boards of Ireland, Ireland, and Senior Lecturer, Mary Immaculate College, University of Limerick, Ireland

Prof. Chloe Marshall, Emerita Professor of Psychology, Language and Education, UCL Institute of Education, UK

Dr Dennis Guiney, Educational Psychologist

Prof. Jo Van Herwegen, Professor of Developmental Psychology and Education, UCL Institute of Education, UK

Hannah Hamid, PhD Candidate, UCL Institute of Education, UK

Tom Silver, Project Coordinator and Trainer, Action-Attainment, UK

Tom Staniford, Marketing Consultant, Staniford Associates, UK

Marie Neave, Executive Headteacher, Drumbeat School ASD services, UK

Melanie Cunningham, Assistant Headteacher, St James Catholic Primary School, UK

Tina Sode, Head of Special Educational Needs, London Borough of Tower Hamlets, UK

Sheldon Snashall, Associate Director, Achieving for Children, UK

Taneisha Pascoe-Mathews, Assistant Headteacher – Inclusion, The Palmer Catholic Academy (Redbridge), UK

Richard White, Trustee, Michael Sieff Foundation, UK

Annamarie Hassall, Chief Executive Officer, National Association for Special Educational Needs, UK

A special thank you from CIE to all our advisors for their invaluable and continued support over the past academic year. This group also reflects CIE's reach and collaborative ethos, with **partners across sectors and areas of work** relevant to what we do.

## Research projects, grants and awards

In the first year of a new strategic plan which sets out research as the main priority moving forward, CIE has secured a research grant funded by the Nuffield Foundation (£203,000): [An international analysis of SEND policy and practice: ScopeSEND](#). The project will provide a detailed and innovative analysis of SEND provision across 9 countries, including the four UK nations and

is led by CIE's director [Susana Castro-Kemp](#), with Professor [Jo Van Herwegen](#) (UCL PHD and CIE) and Dr Peter Kemp from King's College London.

Other research initiatives include an **annual systematic review** of a topic of interest on inclusive education and secondary data analysis of **UNICEF data on least developed and low- and middle-income countries using the multiple indicator cluster survey (MICS)**. This year, the systematic review with meta-synthesis being produced focuses on perceptions of inclusive education by early years and primary education practitioners in countries of the Global South and is being conducted by a team of 9 CIE members and early career researchers ([Leda Kamenopoulou](#), [Susana Castro-Kemp](#), [Daisy Loyd](#), [Zachary Walker](#), Marthe Wiggers, Fatema Janbarwala, Nooreen Sidi), under the leadership of [Dr Gergo Bartl](#), expert in review studies.

Research on MICS data is being led by [Dr Susana Castro-Kemp](#) in collaboration with [Dr Dora Kokosi](#), [Vassilis Sideropoulos](#) and Rose Lombardo, all CIE members and experts in secondary data analysis.

[Dr Panos Rentzelas](#) (CIE member) is leading a project on '**Motivation, well-being, and university subject: A cross-cultural investigation in university students in India and the UK**' with collaborators: Sujata Sriram, Richa Khanna (Tata Institute of Social Sciences, India), [Dr Nicola Abbott](#) and [Prof. Jo Van Herwegen](#) (CIE members);

[Prof. Zachary Walker](#) in collaboration with [Dr Daisy Loyd](#) and [Dr Gergely Bartl](#), (CIE members) and Prof. Shakila Dada of the Centre for Augmentative and Alternative Communication of the University of Pretoria, are working on a project '**Examining special education teachers' perceived competence in implementing inclusive, high-leverage and culturally responsive practices with learners with disabilities**'.

Our MA and Doctoral students in the department of Psychology and Human Development also contribute to the wide-ranging and high-quality research we produce. Students have conducted research on collaborations between sectors in SEND provision, sense of belonging in virtual schools for care

experienced children and young people, issues related to social emotional and mental health, language development and neurodiversity, for example.

## Research Talks and events

This year we hosted two research talks. The first was by **Professor Henri Pesonen** from Oslo University (Norway), who spoke about the challenges of the Finnish policy and provision system for children with SEND. The second was by **Dr Tim Corcoran** from Deakin University (Australia) who spoke about 'Doing Inclusive Education Differently', highlighting the need to be clear about our positionality when thinking about inclusion in education.

Both hybrid events were attended by 12-15 people in person, with a growing number of online participants: 18 registrations and 16 online attendees in the first, and 106 registrations and 52 online attendees in the second talk. We have three research webinars planned for 2024/2025 and these will be advertised on our websites and social media accounts.

We also delighted to have hosted two launch events for projects funded by the Nuffield Foundation. The first was the launch of the '[Talking Time](#)' intervention, a project led by [Professor Julie Dockrell](#) (UCL, PHD and CIE member) and collaborator Dr Sandra Mathers from Oxford University. The second was the launch of the project '[Development of a classroom intervention to improve conversation skills](#)', led by Dr Kirsten Abbot-Smith of the University of Kent, and where [Professor Julie Dockrell](#) is a collaborator, along with Dr Alexandra Sturrock and Dr Colin Bannard from the University of Manchester and Professor Danielle Matthews from the University of Sheffield.

## Early Career Researchers

CIE now is the home of [14 PhD students and early career researchers \(ECRs\)](#), as well as international visiting scholars, who contribute to develop our research and knowledge exchange. We are committed to continue developing a

thriving community of ECRs who will become the future leaders of research in inclusion and education.

Our students are an integral part of the centre. This year, they have been given the opportunity to train as scientific peer-reviewers supporting reviews for [JORSEN – Journal of Research in Special Educational Needs](#).

## Knowledge Exchange and Consultancy

CIE continues to be an excellence hub for knowledge exchange, consultancy and continuous professional development for schools, education practitioners and leaders, families, charities and policymakers. [Dr Amelia Roberts](#), CIE's expert in enterprise and knowledge exchange is currently leading and collaborating on various projects via co-production with stakeholders,:

1. **'Supporting Spoken Language in the Classroom' for Early Years practitioners'**, early development supported by the Education Endowment Foundation with Bristol University and Early Years Southwest Stronger Practice Hub;
2. **'Structures for measuring outcomes for care-experienced young people and measuring performativity in services for care-experienced young people'**, co-designed with Lewisham Local Authority Virtual School, and with collaborators Dr Joe Mintz and Sam Rothwell. This project uses the [Mintz-Roberts Theory of Change model](#) to explore data-based ways of telling the rich narrative of services to support care-experienced young people;
3. **Provision of Independent Evaluation Service for CLAP for Youth@JC**, Hong Kong Jockey Club. Researchers: [Dr Lynne Rogers](#), [Dr Amelia Roberts](#), Dr Natasha Kersh, Stephanie Chan, Dr Adrian Yan. This project evaluates a whole-system initiative across schools and charities to create a 'paradigm shift' for young people's employment prospects in Hong Kong.

[Dr. Dora Kokosi](#) and CIE's director [Dr Susana Castro-Kemp](#) contributed and formed part of the working group set up by the Michael Sieff Foundation to

gather evidence from stakeholders and produce policy recommendations to improve the experience of, and outcomes for young people who are offenders or involved in the youth court system and have SEND. The working group chaired by Prof. Cheryl Thomas (UCL Law) comprised of academics, policymakers and magistrates/judges is being produced and will be published in the Autumn 2024.

There has been growing demand for our world leading suite of online short courses ([Developing Quality Inclusive Practice](#)), developed by our members. This year we launched a new course on **'Effective Communication: The key to behaviour and emotion regulation'**, led by [Dr Liz Halsted](#) (CIE member).

Our Professional Learning Networks continue to provide opportunities for practitioners to connect and learn from each other; CIE member [Liz Herbert](#) is the point of contact for our PLN (Dyslexia).

Our 3-year programme on supervision for school leaders funded by Barnardo's has successfully ended year 1 and preparations are under way for starting cohort 2, year 2, led by our collaborator Simon Kerr-Edwards.

## Public Engagement

The planning for the [first London International Conference on Inclusive Education in 2025 \(LICIE\)](#) is well underway. The call for proposals opened this summer and we will continue to receive applications until the 1<sup>st</sup> of December 2024 in the first instance. This will be a fantastic opportunity for networking and learning from world leaders in inclusive education. Our confirmed Keynote speakers are Prof. Dr. Marcela Pozas and Prof. Kenneth Poon.

Several members of CIE are contributing to the organisation of this event in a variety of ways – thank you to: Dean Crow, [Gergo Bartl](#), [Dora Kokosi](#), [Catherine](#)



[Antalek](#), [Daisy Loyd](#), [Joanna Kolak](#), [Juhayna Taha](#), [Leda Kameonopoulou](#), [Zachary Walker](#) and [Vassilis Sideropoulos](#).

We continue our collaboration with NASEN to deliver the NASEN twilight Talks – Research Series, by UCL CIE members. This year we will delivered five talks:

1. Evidence-Informed Practice, by [Dr Miriam McBreen](#)
2. Evaluating What Works in the Classroom, by [Prof Jo Van Herwegen](#)
3. Accessing children's 'voices' on what matters to them: An overview of the research and recommended practices, by [Dr Susana Castro-Kemp](#)
4. Twilight Talks Research Series: Using focus groups in education settings, by Dr [Leda Kamenopoulou](#)
5. Do you understand, or do you just listen? – Co-producing research in Specialist (Autism) Mentoring by [Dr Brian Irvine](#)

CIE's director [Dr Susana Castro-Kemp](#) is now a member of the lead group of the [SEN Policy Research Forum](#). CIE hosted SENPRF seminar this year on School Exclusions and Non-Attendance which was attended by 60 people, including practitioners, academics, parents, and young people.

CIE is invested in using social media for the benefit of our stakeholders. Therefore, we developed a set of 'house rules' to ensure our social media accounts align with ethical principles, and are used for the ultimate purpose of disseminating our research and knowledge exchange with high standards of professionalism. Thanks to [Dr Joanna Kolak](#), [Liz Herbert](#) and [Dr Theodora Kokosi](#) for leading this.

## Financial sustainability

Our financial sustainability model is changing. We rely on courses, consultancy and events to ensure self-sufficiency. We are pleased to say that this year we reached our income goals, necessary to support our members' research

activity. This is essential to maintain an active and committed team who will continue to work on our priorities for growth.

## Next steps

By the end of 2024/25, we will report on:

- New research awards and income.
- New research and knowledge exchange outputs.
- Research talks and respective attendance, tracked against previous year.
- New consultancy, courses launched, and partnerships established.
- Outcomes from LICIE 2024.
- New website.

Our work will continue to be disseminated through our [social media](#) accounts and email news, as well as through our new website.

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