THE ROLE OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION IN HISTORIC FORCED ADOPTION IN BRITAIN

BRIEFING DOCUMENT

Dr Michael Lambert

Lecturer in Medical Humanities, Lancaster University Medical School

May 2026

SOCIAL WORKERS AND HISTORIC FORCED ADOPTION: BRIEFING DOCUMENT

AUTHOR INFORMATION

Dr Michael Lambert is an academic historian of social policy and the welfare state in Britain since 1945. Using archival records from central government, voluntary and religious organisations and local authorities, he has researched how policies and practice concerning children and families were developed and implemented. These resources include the legacy records of the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) relating to the Moral Welfare Workers Association (MWWA) held at the Modern Records Centre (MRC) at Warwick University. He contributed written, oral and supplementary evidence to the Joint Committee on Human Rights Inquiry on the Right to Family Life: Adoption of Children of Unmarried Women, 1949-76 which was published in July 2022. He also provided similar forms of evidence to the Education Committee investigation into Historical Forced Adoption published in March 2026. Throughout, he has used his research to press the UK Government and other implicated institutions, organisations and authorities about the need for formal apology for their respective roles in historic forced adoption which occurred in Britain from the 1940s to the 1970s.

THE PROFESSIONALISATION OF SOCIAL WORK, c. 1940-70

The role of the social work profession in historic forced adoption is inextricable from its period of expansion and professionalisation from beginning of the Second World War to the formation of the British Association of Social Workers and establishment of Social Services Departments in 1970. Social work with unmarried mothers and adoption were two specialised spheres among many, where increased demands for their services justified the knowledge, autonomy and status to workers employed in these capacities.

The rise in state responsibilities for welfare is intertwined with the expansion of social work and their concomitant professionalisation. This was centred in the growth of state responsibilities towards its citizens during the war, where existing services based on voluntarism, charity and local organisation were insufficient to meet wartime requirements. Reluctantly, the state adopted a far greater directive, regulatory and financial role in developing spheres of welfare where social workers were employed. Although all were deemed and defined as undertaking forms of social work, they had no generic unity or commonality as far as the state and employing organisations were concerned, simply reflected their expansion of historic, functional purposes.[1]

Social work existed prior to the Second World War, rooted in Victorian charitable traditions of 'lady bountiful' and female visiting of the poor, having experienced a similar but smaller expansion during the First World War,[2] but by 1940 it remained small and fragmented, centred on specialist forms of activity. These included as psychiatric social work located in the child guidance movement, almoners as hospital social workers, and family caseworkers of philanthropic of voluntary organisations.[3] Their substantive roles, pay and training varied widely. The establishment and expansion of the welfare state, reaching its culmination during its largely stable, unreformed 'classic' period from 1945 to 1975,[4] provided the platform for social work to obtain its identity as part of professionalisation processes. For social work this 'classic' period ended from 1970 to 1975 owing to the organisational reform of the welfare state between 1970 and 1974, the economic crisis following the Yom Kippur War in 1973, the introduction of generic social work practice and programmes from 1970, and the scandal surrounding the death and report on Maria Colwell in 1974 leading to the 1975 Children Act.[5]

This arc of the rise and peak of the social work profession during these three decades, their inseparability from the state through the expansion and alignment of its functions with a collectivist, progressive, social democratic ethos built around personal social service is a received wisdom in the existing historiography, written mostly by former social workers.[6] Variously represented as a 'golden era',[7] 'zenith',[8] or 'high water mark'[9] for the profession and the welfare state, this judgment reflects the legitimacy of their knowledge basis through casework, opportunities for career progression in large local government social service departments, a generic core to social work identity, and the extension of considerable discretion in the exercise of judgment and autonomy which also informed interprofessional recognition, degrees of mutual respect, and legitimacy.[10]

This narrative is most pronounced in social work for children and families, with wartime experiences of the evacuation of children from towns and cities vulnerable to bombing to the

relative safety of the countryside justifying the expansion of function and professionalisation,[11] leaving profound impacts on the state's relationship with welfare, social work and the family.[12] The creation of dedicated children's services for the first time following the 1946 Curtis Report and 1948 Children Act, which placed an unequivocal emphasis on the place of higher education and highly qualified staff,[13] represented the leading edge of moves towards recognition of social work as a profession with core skills and a defined identity.[14]

The professionalisation of social work was a process rather than event, rooted in a series of cumulative, compounding changes. These were the basis of workers to work within the sphere of social welfare, terms and conditions of employment including salary, pension and pay progression, career opportunities and continued development, and their claims to practice through scientific legitimacy and a credible method of work, primarily casework as a form of social diagnosis. Case records as a tool to operationalise the legitimacy of methods and knowledge in social work formed an important part of this recognition. This model mirrored a similar pattern in the United States, with differences around university training, the basis and configuration of employing organisations, and the differential application of new approaches in casework processes.[15]

'Casework could thus be used as a unifying ideology in an attempt to establish a professional mode of occupational control' which would delimit untrained amateurs and former volunteers working within the social welfare field.[16] Casework as a generic tool underpinned the professional identity of social work and their right, and capacity to know their different subjects in terms recognisable to others.[17] This also afforded them authority of knowledge on human behaviour and a means to translate diagnosis into corresponding action for individual cases across their respective specialised fields of activity.[18]

Whilst mirroring developments in the US, albeit at a slower pace, the casework paradigm had a distinct tradition in the UK rooted in the investigative principles and model of social change developed by the Charity Organisation Society (COS), an influential voluntary social work and social reform organisation, formed in 1869 and whose global influence extended across the Anglosphere in the late Victorian period. This created a capacity for COS workers to assess individual circumstances with a view to overcoming personal adversity and poverty through a programme of character formation and behavioural change.[19] Over time, particularly during the First World War and after, this was influenced by practice from the US around 'social diagnosis' and the psychological understanding of the individual obtained through new forms of disciplinary knowledge and applied expertise.[20] Professionalism was also a mechanism of closure to those without the status, training and qualifications. For the COS, which became the Family Welfare Association (FWA) in 1946, this meant the marginalisation of middle-class female volunteers and respectable amateurs through the employment of salaried, higher paid professionals to provide a modern, quality casework service for client groups.[21] This was 'built on new psychodynamic principles that were universally applicable' rather than based in subjective opinion, generosity of spirit, and the provision of material support.[22]

Psychodynamic understanding was based on disciplinary developments in psychology and psychoanalysis with their origins in the work of Sigmund Freud which, when applied to social work and its casework practice, produced a 'prescriptive model of familial care'.[23] This was shaped around diagnosing and acting upon maladjustment in individuals and their wider

family relationships. From the 1940s this way of understanding the different client groups and social working with them became the 'dominant model',[24] and the blueprint upon which university training, and its expanded capacity to develop social work education, took shape during the post-war decades.[25] This can be seen in contemporary texts, where one for child care officers notes that 'what goes wrong is primarily a failure of relationships in the family'.[26] Reading meaning below outward behaviours to understand and reveal underlying emotions as the basis for their casework was central to texts and teaching.[27] Another contemporary text for probation notes that 'social casework exhibits at every point a functional concern not only with the welfare of individuals but also that of society', and its normalisation.[28]

Scholars and practitioners have recognised tensions and discrepancies between idealised training regimes and their application in decision-making and casework practice, particularly the dominant psychodynamic form which was associated with professional expansion.[29] Notwithstanding their observations about this tension, and the relative proportions of trained to untrained social workers in the postwar decades, the omnipresence, rather than omniscience, of psychodynamic language is inescapable in the reflections of social workers practicing during the period of professionalisation associated with the 'classic' welfare state.[30]

The parallel growth of welfare state apparatus and the social work profession created a range of new employment opportunities and increased existing ones within local government, the National Health Service, and a spectrum of voluntary organisations both supplementing and complementing these activities, primarily in relation to the welfare of the family.[31] These could represent continuity and change. Continuity in bodies like Fairbridge, emigrating unaccompanied children to Australia,[32] or in university settlements where social workers lived and worked.[33] Change was also evident despite uncertainty on the place and future of voluntarism given the expansion of statutory welfare provision through the creation of new organisations such as the Family Service Unit,[34] emblematic of new ideals and the centrality of psychodynamic, relational work with families.[35] The uncertain borderland between statutory and voluntary provision also constituted a site of tension within the social work profession which intersected with historic specialised interests and identities.[36]

This frontier between statutory and voluntary social work services existed within a 'mixed economy' of care, representing a greater role of the state in welfare, with greater porosity and flexibility in terms of funding, provision, purpose and scope of certain activities.[37]

Within histories written by former social work practitioners, discretion and professional autonomy have been seen favourably, particularly given their subsequent erosion through moves towards standardised assessments and pathways which diminish flexibility, knowledge, and their comparable professional position. However, such autonomy and professional self-determination also entailed paternalism, as contemporaries recognised: 'One of the hallmarks of a profession is that the practitioner, because of skills derived from a body of abstract knowledge, can discern what is best for the client'.[38] Others that there were 'inarticulate parents, vulnerable to influence by officialdom' in deciding what was best for their family or child.[39] Anthropological and ethnographic studies observing social workers in the field both reflected upon the coercive potential for social work practice through the casework method, control over material resources, and the basis of action in professional discretion without appeal.[40] It was precisely this uncertainty and unpredictability of the application of discretion

and its underlying principles of psychodynamic casework which were challenged during the hearings around the death of Maria Colwell and the subsequent 1975 Children Act which began the juridification of child welfare,[41] and other forms of social work practice with vulnerable or marginalised client groups.

Discretion in social work was a form of street level bureaucracy,[42] whereby their actions were shaped by organisational demands and purposes which were, in turn, operational and pragmatic interpretations of opaque legislative parameters subject to guidance, precedent and negotiation of senior civil servants far removed from everyday practice.[43] This dynamic was far more significant than periodic moments of report and reform, as these dynamics served to realise what forms of social work meant and became in practice.

Taken together, the 'effect of professionalism in Britain… was to fragment social work in terms of specialisms which came to be identified with particular settings'.[44] This differentiation and specialisation was functional, with each based in different organisations serving different purposes, with overlap commonplace and considerable.[45] Disciplinary isolation and identities were often reinforced by such contacts despite routine professional entanglements between different social workers across their service domains, referrals, and management of casework.[46] Welfare state reform from 1970 to 1974 not only signified a shift in the move towards a single social work professional identity through a common, generic skillset to enable universal practice, but also the purpose and purview of their new employing organisations.[47] These were typically Social Service Departments under the umbrella of the personal social services, rather than a range of disparate local authority departmental services which had developed iteratively and incrementally over time.[48]

It is within this backdrop that the slow professionalisation of social work and the rationalisation of the state can be seen, culminating in the 1968 Seebohm Report on social services[49] and the 1970 Local Authority Social Services Act. This built upon two prior reports by Eileen Younghusband commissioned by the Carnegie UK Trust in 1947 and 1951,[50] and the working party report on social services in 1959 which she chaired.[51] Alongside pursuing generic social work training and provision were demands, rooted in psychodynamic understanding, for a unified single family service in place of fragmented, specialised branches which often duplicated contact with client groups, and lacked a coherent plan of action for them as a result. This existed as part of a tension between the historic benefits of specialisation within the emergence of different forms of functional practice against the economies of scale necessary to ensure quality and quantity of service with appropriate career prospects and professional recognition.[52] Professional unification was bitterly contested, and the road to recognition was far from clear to contemporaries.

However, '[r]egardless of reservations expressed about the Seebohm Report, its proposals represented a major gain for the social work profession'.[53] These gains did not include adoption agencies or the social workers they employed, who remained mostly outside their orbit until the implementation of the 1975 Children Act which sought to create a 'comprehensive service' in the field, mirroring the earlier developments of Seebohm for adoption social work.[54]

These developments provide the background to the formation of the British Association of Social Work (BASW) in 1970, which occurred to mirror changes in the organisation of social work following the 1970 Local Authority Social Services Act and unified social service

departments, and the recognition of a core professional knowledge, identity and method. Like the profession itself, this has earlier roots. The British Federation of Social Workers (BFSW) was formed in 1935, to which certain other representative bodies affiliated, but not all. The Association of Social Workers (ASW) as a separate body was formed in 1951 following the Younghusband Reports, and was associated with personality divisions in the profession centred on her influence and development of generic social work courses at the London School of Economics from 1954. The nucleus of BASW can be found in the formation of the Standing Conference of Organisations of Social Workers in 1963, whose creation stemmed from the 1959 Younghusband Report.

BASW was created from each of the principal professional social work representative bodies aside from probation. These were the Association of Child Care Officers (ACCO, formed 1948), Association of Family Case Workers (AFCW, formed 1940), Association of Psychiatric Social Workers (APSW, formed 1928), the Institute of Medical Social Workers (IMSW, formed 1890), ASW, and the Moral Welfare Workers Association (MWWA, formed 1938). Given the centrality of moral welfare workers in social work with unmarried mothers in terms of casework, and the arrangement of adoption placements for illegitimate infants, it is to their roles and responsibilities in the welfare state that we now turn.

MORAL WELFARE AND THE UNMARRIED MOTHER

Moral welfare workers were Church social workers responsible for the social problems presented by unmarried mothers and illegitimate children. The professionalising dynamics of social work were bifurcated in moral welfare between progressive field workers and punitive residential workers. Their work existed within the 'mixed economy' of the welfare state and these employing relationships shaped their activities.

To understand the professional representative role of the MWWA in the historical development of BASW and the social work profession, the function and activities of moral welfare workers must first be examined. Moral welfare workers were the principal group of social work professionals involved in both identifying and referring mostly young, unmarried women to mother and baby homes, and in arranging adoptions. For this reason, they are considered in detail on their own, and the relationship of associated and related social work professionals in historic forced adoption practices are considered separately.

'Moral welfare work', according to the major contemporary academic study of the topic published in 1965, 'is essentially social work undertaken in the name and on behalf of the Church'.[55] This definition was agreed by Eileen Younghusband, the influential social work academic and chair of statutory and voluntary inquiries into social work outlined above,[56] in her landmark two-volume retrospective study of the professionalisation of social work from 1950 to 1975: 'Moral welfare combined social with distinctively Christian help'.[57] Whilst faith had underpinned the origins of social work and the motivations of social workers, this explicit connection had waned with professionalisation, specialisation, and the solidification of the welfare state after 1945.[58]

The work of moral welfare was extensive, shifting from its historic focus on sex workers and the social purity movement to providing casework for pregnant single women, unmarried mothers, and their children through the wartime expansion of their work.[59] Whilst embracing modernisation and professionalisation in line with other specialised fields, religious judgments of shame, sin and sexual transgression of gendered norms remained: 'Moral welfare workers, from the Victorian philanthropic pioneers through to the mid-twentieth century university-trained social workers, understood themselves as sinners in need of salvation alongside the 'fallen' women with whom they worked'.[60]

Through both their social work and religious lenses, moral welfare workers conceptualised unmarried motherhood as a social problem, a type of moral pathology with illegitimacy serving as a proxy indicator for failed families and homes within post-war norms.[61] This framework was embedded both in specific guidance for the sphere of moral welfare as a specialised branch of social work, but also social work training and education for those outside of the specialty who would encounter and refer such mothers as required.[62] As Younghusband notes in her history of the social work profession: 'There was also a tendency to isolate different groups for special, often separate, provision according to age, handicap or social failure'.[63] Unmarried mothers and their illegitimate children constituted one such recognised group within post-war social work and its realisation within and across the welfare state apparatus.

In academic terms, the work of Leontine Young from the USA and John Bowlby from UK were particularly influential and required reading on most qualifying social work programmes for the topic of unmarried motherhood, providing touchstones of understanding in the field or moral welfare.[64]

Regina Kunzel, writing about the USA where the psychodynamic turn occurred earlier and served to influence social work trends with unmarried mothers,[65] reflected that 'illegitimacy looked different when refracted through the lens of professional social work'.[66] Rather than sex and conception outside marriage simply being a shameful sin as seen through a religions lens, the social work one rooted in psychodynamic understanding saw unmarried motherhood as a surface problem which represented underlying problems of neurosis, emotional immaturity and instability to obtain parental attention, the inability to establish and form proper relationships, and maladjustment.[67] This knowledge of the outer and inner pathology of unmarried motherhood provided the necessary tools for social workers to understand and act, particularly for those trained at Josephine Butler Memorial House in Liverpool as the principal location for specialised teaching on moral welfare founded in 1920.[68] This afforded a 'scientific' basis to their practice rooted in pathological conceptions of unmarried mothers within wider social, cultural and political norms which idealised the nuclear family.[69] Such ideals were amplified and magnified in the post-war context where alarm over marital failure and population decline created fostered more socially conservative views towards the family, alongside an emphasis on fertility and reconstruction within the norms of welfare state legislation and policies.[70] It is in this context that the 'traditional' family and associated attitudes around sex and illegitimacy should be understood: as historically produced and specific rather than timeless.[71] These were further reified in relation to child welfare under the rubric of creating and maintaining 'normal family life'.[72]

This capacity of social work to know and look beyond surface impressions and judgments is clear in the work of Young: 'Not until we were free to observe and record the case histories of many unmarried mothers, to consider them from a scientific rather than a moral point of view, to note similarities and contradictions, and to follow the fine thread of continuity between cause and effect could be begin to learn some of the answers to this difficult and troubling problem'. Here, she singled out Sigmund Freud for special mention in terms of the method to understand the unmarried mother as case.[73]

The other influential figure within British traditions of psychological understandings of unmarried motherhood is John Bowlby. His work 'cannot, in itself, be held fully accountable for the phenomenon of "Bowlbyism" – that is, the intense concentration on the married mother permanently in the home with the child as the unique and adequate guarantee of the child's psychic health, the defence against delinquency, and family, and therefore "social" breakdown'.[74] Bowlbyism as a popularised, professionalised interpretation of the work of Bowlby is a much larger construct and conception within the post-war welfare estate which offered 'a simple and universal solution to virtually every question of childcare' through its simplified emphasis on secure, maternal love as the purpose of practice.[75] When applied to the sphere of unmarried motherhood and adoption, Bowlbyism meant ensuring substitute parents were obtained as early as possible given the underlying pathology of the mother and inevitable inconsistencies which stemmed from this assessment of her future parental capacity. Such language, even in a

popularised or debased form which arguably may not represent Bowlby's original intention or conclusions, is widespread in social work files.[76]

Bowlby's core work relevant to unmarried motherhood was *Child care and the growth of love*, a Penguin paperback version of his 1951 report on maternal deprivation for the World Health Organisation.[77] There are chapters on both illegitimacy and adoption and the substitute family, from which the below excerpts are drawn.

Firstly, in this work, in relation to the social pathology and problem of the unmarried mother, Bowlby argued that 'there appeared a strong unconscious desire to become pregnant, motivated sometimes by the need for a love-object which they had never had and sometimes by the desire to use the shame of an illegitimate baby as a weapon against their dominating parents'.[78] Moreover, reflecting psychodynamic norms, 'it is the opinion of many social workers with psychiatric knowledge and experience of this problem that with many girls becoming an unmarried mother is neurotic and not just accidental'.[79] This point being used to extend and extrapolate the legitimacy of such views, rather than criticising them.

Bowlby's analysis underpinned the notion of early separation in practice in adoption in the best interests of the child by concluding in *Child care and the growth of love*: 'The evidence given earlier in this book points unmistakeably to its being in the interests of the adopted baby's mental health for him to be adopted soon after birth. No other arrangement permits continuity of mothering and most other arrangements fail even to ensure that he gets any. If the baby remains with his mother, it is not unlikely that she will neglect and reject him; if he is parked temporarily in a nursery or group foster-home his development will often suffer in some degree'.[80]

Bowlby's conclusion created a tension between an ideological affirmation of keeping mother and child together by religious, statutory and voluntary institutions, and the reality of adoption as preferable, preferred and the primary course of action given the lack of financial and material support available to make such an affirmation of maternal bonds a viable prospect. As Pat Thane and Tanya Evans argue in their monograph about single motherhood in twentieth century Britain: 'Adoption was the last resort for many mothers, chosen by some, forced on others by parents, by the father, or by the difficulty of bringing up a child independently'.[81]

This contradiction was recognised at the time. An internal discussion in 1953 within the Church of England Moral Welfare Council, the central body responsible for developing its work with unmarried mothers, bears out the problems this raised in the determination of policy. ''Some Children's Officers say that a mother starts off with good intentions and our encouragement to keep her baby, and then a few years later, she finds herself unable to provide a home for her child who then has to be taken into care by the Children's Committee. Followers of Dr John Bowlby say that if the mother is not going to be able to keep her child, he ought to be adopted immediately, i.e. as near to his birth as possible, and our encouragement of a mother to keep her child for at least three or four months until she can make her plans breaks the continuous mothering by the same person which is so important to a child'.[82] Such a statement taking for granted that adoption was normalised as the policy solution in the activities of Church of England moral welfare, rather than social work supporting the preservation of the mother and child as an atypical family unit.

Similarly, Manchester's Coordinating Committee for Children Neglected or Ill-Treated in their Own Home, which served as a precursor to modern child protection practices bringing together social workers to share knowledge, exchange views, and agree a common course of action,[83] defined mothers with two or more illegitimate children as being neglectful regardless of their material circumstances or parental capabilities.[84] This reflected prevailing attitudes of the time, including those of the British Medical Association and Magistrates Association.[85] The inference being that the rehabilitation of unmarried mothers could be achieved through adoption which allowed mothers to start their 'normal' family afterwards, putting the shameful episode behind them. Those having two or more illegitimate children showing incorrigibility, parental incapacity, and failure to adhere to the plans demanded by casework.

In their capacity as social workers, then, moral welfare workers focused primarily on practical action rather than spiritual guidance.[86] Psychodynamic casework was prevalent and evident, with the1965 academic study of moral welfare finding that: 'Over the years the work seems to have become centred on adolescent girls with personal and behavioural difficulties, notably extra-marital pregnancy'.[87]

The post-war blueprint for moral welfare work within the welfare state was established in 1943 by a circular from the Ministry of Health outlining actions required by local welfare authorities for illegitimate children and their mothers.[88] Whilst this covered England, similar circulars were also issues by the Welsh Board of Health and Health Department for Scotland the same purpose with no divergence in policy recommendations.[89] The circular was a product of the Subcommittee on Mothers and Young Children which had deliberated over the preceding months about rising rates of illegitimacy, its associated perception as a social problem in need of immediate action, and the need to maximise female labour market participation.[90]

This circular advocated for the development of local policies in conjunction with existing voluntary and religious organisations to provide services for illegitimate children and their mothers, rather than local authorities developing their own independently. [91] Within the recommendations were the employment of additional social workers and greater use of adoption, both proportionally funded through Exchequer money at that time. The Moral Welfare Workers Association later reflected that a 'new partnership had been forged' through the circular, and was integral in legitimating their sphere of social work activity. [92] It created a virtual monopoly of moral welfare as the specialised branch responsible for social work with unmarried mothers, offering secure – if poorly remunerated in relative terms – employment, shifting the role of diocesan organising secretaries from an administrative into a casework role.[93] This shift also changed an emphasis in the subject of their work from mothers to centring the child and their purported best interests in line with concurrent child welfare developments subsequently underpinned by the 1946 Curtis Report and 1948 Children Act.[94] The retention of moral welfare within a modernising welfare state reflected the endurance of censure, stigma and judgment towards unmarried mothers at all levels of official understanding of illegitimacy as a social problem.[95]

This 'mixed economy' whereby local authorities, and the Local Health Authority following the creation of the National Health Service in 1948, remained entrenched throughout the post-war decades with subsidies for providing organisations being preferred over direct employment of social workers for the most part.[96] The extent of these subsidies increased from the original

1943 circular with secure funding as part of core services within the National Health Service, although their local application and amount varied.[97] Within internal government discussions about policies for unmarried mothers, the 1943 circular remained the touchstone until the reorganisations and professional changes ushered in between 1970 and 1974.[98] This pragmatic approach of statutory funding and voluntary provision also overcome the problem of denomination and the spiritual role of welfare for unmarried mothers demanded by religious bodies which prevented the nationalisation of mother and baby homes in 1948.[99]

This moral welfare work, as a branch of social work, along with adoptions were managed on lines of strict religious adherence by employing institutional entities including Catholic, Methodist, Baptist, Jewish and other faith-based organisations. This formed part of the 'matching' which defined adoption practice in the post-war decades to ensure that the needs of the child were met, with assessments for prospective adoptive parents undertaken along lines of religious adherence, class conformity to gender norms and as part of casework for couples unable to conceive.[100] Religious adoption agencies were selective over the children chosen for adoption, with older, mixed-race or disabled children being residualised as the preserve of local authorities, whose role as registered adoption agencies increased in this respect following the 1958 Adoption Act.[101] This, despite the best interests of the child being foregrounded in the postwar practice of moral welfare workers and through the *guardian ad litem* role of child care officer before the courts. The needs and demands of adoptive parents had considerable influence over the activities of adoption agencies and the social workers they employed.[102]

Despite this, local health authorities did employ social workers or specialised health visitors in these roles, along with establishing and maintaining their own mother and baby homes employing residential staff but these constituted a minority.[103] These were typically established in the absence of suitable moral welfare workers or capacity in homes run by religious institutions given demand from local referrals. The terms of the 1943 circular limited their growth and use, [104] with the Ministry of Health managing their approval through their oversight of local health authority plans. Sheffield established their home on Hucklow Road in the north of the city in 1951 following Ministry approval of plans for services discharged under Section 22 of the 1946 National Health Service Act relating to the Care of Mothers and Young Children developed by the Medical Officer of Health and approved by the Local Health Authority.[105] A similar process occurred for Durham and the establishment of Smelt House in 1957 as part of a routine review of local health authority services. This followed the closure of several nearby homes run by moral welfare associations which lacked both size and staffing to remain viable, although they continued to manage adoptions for babies born in the home,[106] as did Sheffield.

The varied realisation of this 'mixed economy' had a profound impact on the work of moral welfare workers across the country. This existed between a 'professional service' rooted in casework for mothers, children and adoptive parents within the adoption triad, and an 'inadequate welfare service' maintained by 'ill-defined' and 'unqualified' staff, far removed from modern, professional standards and expectations in social work practice.[107] The availability of suitable staffing remained a perennial problem, providing in parallel further evidence of the need for professionalisation within the moral welfare field.

The move towards psychodynamic practice over conservative religious attitudes within moral welfare organisations created increasing disconnection between the outlook and activities of

workers and committees which governed them. [108] This disconnected varied both by denomination and geography, with Scotland remaining more evangelical.[109] With professionalisation across the post-war decade, moral welfare workers increasingly held more in common with allied social workers in the local welfare state than with religious figures and personnel interested in the field of moral welfare.[110] Such figures remained wedded to older ideas of sinful mothers rather than modern psychodynamic forms based in casework. The extent of this change can be gauged through increasing interchanges of social workers moving between professional branches and employing organisations at the local level, particularly moral and child welfare.[111]

This move can also between seen in differences between moral welfare workers operating in the field, communities and local welfare state and indoor residential workers. The latter emphasising traditional and spiritual responsibilities of care for mothers over casework processes. The poor physical condition and regimented routines of the homes also inhibited modern social work practice such as interviewing, casework, reliable records and interprofessional communication.[112] Low pay, long hours, a lack of relief and limited training were widespread complaints which contributed to the inhibition of social work in residential settings given in evidence given to the 1966 Williams Report on residential homes and institutions. A sense of vocation being the only mitigating factor which kept the sector from collapsing according to the collective voice of such workers at the time. [113] It is this context which gives rise to significant official concern about life inside the walls of mother and baby homes, validating the testimonies of mothers and their abusive treatment.[114] As Russell Whiting observes in his doctoral thesis on the Church and social work professionalisation, outdoor workers were more progressive and in line with professionalising norms whilst indoor ones remained punitive.[115]

However, 'the continuance of this social work carried out in the name of the Church was dependent on the good will of the political community'. This good will meant reliance upon the Local Health Authority, and to a lesser extent local authority Children's Department, for the financial support to continue to undertake social work with unmarried mothers including adoption.[116] This dependence was a hallmark of relations between the statutory and voluntary sector within the welfare state as borne out in other examples of funding for social work organisations.[117]

Ultimately, and crucially given prevailing understanding today which has mostly emphasised social judgment as instrumental in adoption, and the role of parents and the extended family over that of the church and state, it was this configuration of moral welfare work within the local welfare state which shaped the prospects of whether or not an unmarried mother would come to the attention of the authorities and be placed on the pipeline towards a mother and baby home and adoption. The proportion of cases of illegitimate children born against those who were referred to a mother and baby home for adoption varied. In London, this was between 1 in 5 and 1 in 6 of all illegitimate births.[118] Not all unmarried mothers came within the purview of the authorities nor could be placed on the pipeline given institutional constraints of beds and places, the paucity of moral welfare workers in the field, and the limits of public authorities whose state sanctioned subsidises shaped, maintained and underpinned the entire system, but remained parsimonious and frugal in the extreme. As Younghusband concludes in her magisterial history of the social work profession in the post-war decades:

‘Moral welfare associations themselves were exploited by the failures of public provision, with the result that they continued for too long and attempted too much’.[119]

Moral welfare workers were, then, church social workers specialised in the needs of illegitimate children and their unmarried mothers. The religious adherence and social work training of moral welfare workers created a form of knowledge which saw unmarried mothers as more pathological than sinful, with adoption the best means to provide for the future of their children. This knowledge was institutionalised in the post-war decades through the 1943 circular which created the administrative assemblage for moral welfare work within the local welfare state through an increased employment of social workers and public subsidies for their activities. To all intents and purposes, moral welfare workers were employed to serve the new state logics, with sectarian separation overcoming the related issue of faith in adoption and the selection and placement of infants with suitable adoptive parents. The financial basis for this administrative assemblage was not generous, and parsimony limited the expansion of the number of social workers and, in turn, the numbers of mothers the system was able to manage through mother and baby homes and adoption placements. Moral welfare workers were not passive within this system, but active, articulating their demands as social workers through their professional association: the Moral Welfare Workers Association.

THE MORAL WELFARE WORKERS' ASSOCIATION

The Moral Welfare Workers' Association was the representative body for qualified social workers specialising in the field of moral welfare. Its main role was to lobby as a social work organisation for improved pay, terms and conditions rather than as a campaigning organisation around illegitimacy, unmarried mothers and adoption. It was one of seven founding bodies of the British Association of Social Workers in 1970.

The Moral Welfare Workers Association emerged from a proposal by the Church of England Standing Committee of Diocesan Organising Secretaries for Moral Welfare in 1938. This body existed in parallel to the representative and institutional apparatus concerned with moral welfare policy, which was the preserve of the Church of England Advisory Board for Moral Welfare. The standing committee reflected concerns around practice and the position of social work with unmarried mothers and adoption from those involved at the local and field level.

At the point the Association was formed, there was significant overlap between diocesan organising secretaries as administrative, financial and secretarial figures responsible for moral welfare within a diocese who reported to the religious, rather than social work, hierarchy of the Church of England, and working as moral welfare workers. This practice of holding dual roles continued after the formation of the Association and professionalisation owing to diocese sizes and staff shortages, although the numbers of organising secretaries within the Association dwindled to less than 20 out of a total membership of 370 by 1966.[120] The majority at this time – more than 300 – were caseworkers, with only a further 30 coming from the more punitive residential sector for those working within mother and baby homes.

The lack of trained workers was highlighted by the Home Office, who were responsible for the regulation of the adoption sector and agencies at a local level through the Children's Department. This inhibited the development of adoption as a form of social work following the introduction of the 1926 Adoption Act prior to the beginning of the Second World War. [121] At its formation in 1938 the Association had around 150 members within the Church of England which expanded to 360 as the numbers of appointments increased following the 1943 circular, and the inclusion of other denominations, particularly Catholicism and its parallel system of child rescue agencies which served a similar function to diocesan moral welfare associations.[122] The Association affiliated to the British Federation of Social Workers in 1942.

Recognition of the Moral Welfare Workers Association was formalised within the Church of England in 1943 through the Moral Welfare Council which provided oversight, direction and regulation for the activities of diocesan moral welfare associations, secretaries and workers. This was a product of the financial security afforded by the Ministry circular as 'the Church Assembly recognised the work of the Moral Welfare Council as an integral part of the Church's work and accepted financial responsibility for its central staff'. Its membership was reduced from an unwieldy and representative 125 to a central executive of just 15, composed primarily of senior workers rather than religious delegates, although still chaired by a Bishop.[123] The Moral Welfare Council was later subsumed with other welfare and community activities performed by the Church of England as a unit under the direction of the Board of Social Responsibility from 1958. The Moral Welfare Council, in turn, became the Council of Social

Work in 1961, reflecting the professional changes associated with the 1959 Younghusband Report. Given the scope and scale of its work when compared with others forms of welfare and their spiritual and ethical aspects, particularly a range of issues identified with liberalisation and permissiveness,[124] and the increasing shift of the Board from operational to strategic concerns as the 'social conscience' of the Church,[125] the Council preserved a considerable degree of autonomy despite these institutional transformations..

The Association focused on improved the terms and conditions of employment, particularly salaries and pensions given the qualification requirements and comparability with other workers across the profession, which reflected the relative skills costs against the previous method of 'friendly visitors' or interested, often unmarried, amateurs within a diocese.[126]

It did engage in limited lobbying, primarily with the British Federation of Social Workers, the Church of England Moral Welfare Council – where the bulk of its membership was drawn – and to a lesser extent, the government through the Home Office Children's Department. Such lobbying by the Association usually occurred around key moments of professional reform, including the 1959 Younghusband and 1968 Seebohm Reports on social work and the recommendation of their implementations.[127] The Association was not as active as the Association of Children's Officers in pushing for the reform of their branch of social work, in particular legislative changes.[128] Here, the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child was far more influential and significant in advancing the position of unmarried women within policy circles compared with the Moral Welfare Workers Association.[129]

The 1949, 1958 and 1975 Adoption Acts were not significantly influenced by the Association in terms of genesis or development. The 1949 and 1958 Acts reflecting Home Office deliberations around sector regulation and failures of implementation, highlighted in the 1954 Hurst Report, with a preference for the status quo until the series of social work and social changes which provided the background to the 1972 Houghton Report and the 1975 Act.[130]

The Church of England Moral Welfare Council and its successors enjoyed a much closer relationship to policy communities within the Home Office Children's Department and the Ministry of Health Maternity and Child Welfare Division through personal contacts and reciprocal co-option on committees and policy activities.[131]

The contents of the Association's archive, as part of the archive of the British Association of Social Workers held at Warwick University's Modern Records Centre shows these interfaces in terms of professionalisation, specialised practice and roles, particularly in relation to its own registration and membership criteria around qualifications, and its affiliation to the wider profession through the Federation.[132] From 1962 it published the *Bulletin of the Moral Welfare Workers Association* which represented a blend of news and updates along with short articles on aspects of their work. Members also published about moral welfare work in other social work journals including *Case Conference* (managed by the Federation), *Social Work* (managed by the Family Welfare Association), *The Medical Officer* (managed by the Society of Medical Officers of Health) and *Child Adoption* (managed by the Standing Conference of Societies Registered for Adoption) among others. The Church of England Moral Welfare Council produced its own journal, the *Quarterly Review* (1942-51), *Moral Welfare* (1951-58) and the *Crucible* (1959-). These fulfilled a similar function to the Bulletin, with Association members also corresponding and publishing material.

Its lobbying activities were confined primarily to demonstrating the need for a stable and recognised role for moral welfare workers within the welfare state owing to their institutionally ambiguous position as statutorily funded but based within voluntary agencies. These reflected wider ones of the greater recognition and advancement of the social work profession in conjunction with other representative specialty organisations. Moral welfare was one of seven founding branches of modern social work in Britain in 1970, with the Association forming part of the British Association of Social Workers.

SOCIAL WORK, SOCIAL WORKERS AND THE UNMARRIED MOTHER

Whilst moral welfare was the specialised social work field of illegitimate children and their mothers inflected with Christian values, other branches of social work were involved in their ascertainment and management of their care. Moral welfare work was not undertaken in isolation but as wider patterns of social work rooted in similar methods and processes of casework, including referrals to moral welfare workers as part of their caseload.

Whilst focused on unmarried mothers, 'the scope of the moral welfare workers' case-load was broad, and they were an integral part of local social provision.'[133] This judgment is captured in the 1969 Moral Welfare Workers Association Study Group Report which commented that moral welfare work 'is social work and is done in cooperation with other social workers and agencies, and the moral welfare worker is everywhere recognised as a fellow worker in that field.'[134] Its specialised delineation within the field of social work was due to funding, their sphere of responsibility for unmarried women as a social problem, and the corresponding statutory basis of funding within the local welfare state. Eileen Younghusband, in her authoritative history of the post-war profession recognised that 'the care of unmarried mothers and the social problems of illegitimacy, both well established fields of social work'.[135]

According to the major contemporary academic study of the field published in 1965, 'the moral welfare worker's status as a social worker was usually taken for granted by local authority officials and workers; sometimes personal contacts were close, and even those officials who were somewhat critical or negative in their attitude towards moral welfare work as a whole frequently spoke warmly of their particular local worker'.[136] These types of everyday professional interrelationships and local activity are largely invisible in the representative and lobbying activity of the Association, and the grand narrative of social work professionalisation. These include the ascertainment and referral of unmarried mothers to moral welfare workers during the course of their work which were, in turn, underpinned by identical training rooted in psychodynamic understandings of illegitimacy and the unmarried mother. Bowlbyism was widespread across the practice of the social work profession during the post-war decades of its expansion, and not confined the claims to knowledge of moral welfare workers in isolation.[137]

Crucially, 'social work then becomes what social workers do, and social work history, to a considerable degree, becomes the history of social workers' practices'.[138] This view of professional history being defined by activity is one shared by others: 'Social work can only be defined by examining what social workers do'.[139] Social work was and is *a form of work*, whose purpose was and is situated within a complex organisational landscape.[140]

Here, according to Jatinder Sandhu, whose doctoral thesis focused on adoption policy and practice using sampled case records of a historic moral welfare and adoption agency, and who served as an expert witness to the 2022 Joint Committee on Human Rights inquiry into historic forced adoption, social workers 'represented the human face of adoption to birth mothers. Their influence on birth mothers' experiences of adoption would have been significant'.[141] She takes this point further, recognising that 'birth mothers' choices and experiences of adoption were largely determined by the policies of adoption agencies and the practice of social

workers'[142] with the capacity of mothers to have 'meaningful choices' mediated and curtailed through their interaction with social workers.[143] Confirmation of this can be seen in evidence of mothers to the 2022 inquiry, where they construct a picture of constraint and coercion with adoption as the desired casework outcome, against the intentions of mothers.[144]

Situating social work practice encounters between a worker and client in the local, organisational context in which workers were employed and, in turn, the overarching national professional and regulatory one, was the basis for my doctoral thesis which used over 2,000 social work case files as a means to trace and understand these dynamics. [145] Given that psychodynamic casework and their corresponding records constitute a significant artefact of the professionalisation of social work, using such records in a systematic way afforded me a crucial window into everyday social work practice. These records should not be seen as neutral or objective, but reflecting the assumptions and actions of social workers trained in casework and employed to undertake forms of specialised social work. According to one social work academic, such records 'manufacture a documentary reality, embodied in notices of hearing, sworn affidavits, and reports on file, which cumulatively demonstrate that at the very least [social workers] do what is organisationally required'.[146]

Child care officers, being the fieldworkers of local authority Children's Departments established in 1948 following the 1946 Curtis Report, were the specialised branch of social work most commonly in contact with unmarried mothers and the social problem of illegitimacy. As noted earlier, there was considerable professional and personal interchange between the fields of child and moral welfare. The responsibility of child care officers was through the admission of children into care, with unmarried mothers in such a position serving to confirm the judgment of Bowlby and their associated professional training as correct through breaks in continuous care by their very contact with, and need for, such services.[147] This, despite admissions to care being closely related to other forms of social, material and welfare support, [148] alongside the quantity and quality of trained child care social workers.[149] However, seeing the situation refracted through the lens of social work, as noted by Regina Kunzel earlier, reaffirmed the validity of their professional horizons and organisational world view in respect to unmarried mothers as a social problem.

In relation to adoption the Children's Department and child care officers also had two roles. Firstly, in their capacity as an adoption agency for the local authority, although confined primarily to 'unadoptable' children and with most registering in this capacity after the 1958 Adoption Act, as noted above.[150] This coexisted with their contradictory responsibility to inspect and regulate the work of registered adoption agencies given that most adoptions occurred through such agencies rather than admissions into care and the transfer of parental responsibility through the local authority.[151]

Secondly, undertaking *guardian ad litem* duties notionally on behalf of the child before the court as part of the process of securing an adoption order. Their role here was to uphold processes of consent, ensure the suitability of adoptive parents as new guardians, and obtain an adoption order as part of the discharge of their duties to maintain the best interests of the child.[152] However, their role here was marked by routinisation, with their reports being repetitive and generic to manage the volume of applications, [153] and they were frequently found to have simply 'rubber stamped' the process in the interests of expediency.[154]

Gillian Clark raises a significant point in this respect in relation to the discharge of these duties and the role of mother and baby homes within social work practice, recognising that demand for children to adopt was high across the post-war decades, and supply struggled to keep pace. This dynamic was, accordingly, 'a powerful influence in a home which was both responsible for girls taking decisions about the futures of children who could supply that demand, and connected or obligated to the agency or to third parties creating that same demand. This may have been a highly important influential factor in deciding the future of children'.[155] This would never have been formally articulated in documents, legislation, or the work of professional associations, but it represented the very fabric of social work practice with unmarried mothers and illegitimate children.

Moreover, the primary reason for the admission of the children of unmarried mothers into care was poverty, and this was consistent across the postwar decades. The National Assistance Board (1948-66) was established following the abolition of the Poor Law in 1948 to provide and administer benefits to those not otherwise provided by the welfare state, although it continued and perpetuated its principles of deterrence and less eligibility for those unable to support themselves without recourse to public funds. Aside widows and deserted wives, unmarried mothers were designated as an undeserving category of applicants, with the cruel and judgmental attitudes of officials designed to obtain a maintenance order and paternal financial responsibility for children being 'condoned' or even 'encouraged' by senior officials despite public pronouncements about eligibility and the provision of a safety net. [156]

The successor to the NAB, the Supplementary Benefits Commission (1966-80), maintained its policies of 'harassment' and default suspicion around paternity and cohabitation, with a view to reducing the costs to the public purse. [157] The creation of basic scales and entitlements by the Commission was undermined by the continuation of assessments which provided material support through additional payments or exceptional needs rather than an increase of baseline benefit payments using the scales.[158] This reflected a commitment by officials to move women into work where financial responsibility would shift from them to the Ministry of Social Security and also the Ministry of Health through funded places in local authority daycare.[159] Pursuing paternal financial responsibility continued to be their primary goal, often secured at the expense of mothers and their children, with poverty among single parent headed households being widespread.

Even by the 1970s, the Supplementary Benefits Commission 'had done little more than guarantee a life of long-term hardship for the parents and children who were dependent on it'.[160] Dennis Marsden's sociological study showed that poverty was the abiding experience of unmarried mothers, [161] which, in turn, made them more vulnerable and visible to actions from child care officers and other social workers given that poverty constituted the 'wallpaper of practice' for the profession.[162] Such visibility served to reinforce existing notions that unmarried mothers were neglectful by definition, and those who relinquished a child for adoption were, ironically, more mature than their Bowlbyist analysis permitted by recognising their own purported inability and incapacity to meet the needs of their child.

Pat Thane sees this as integral to the rise in adoption given the intentional restriction of viable alternatives for unmarried mothers through the welfare state: 'Almost certainly it was harder after the war for an unmarried mother to support herself and her child' than before.[163] Access

to the benefits of the welfare state was conditional on a mother's relationship as a wife rather than a mother in terms of benefits and the organising principles underpinning their eligibility and disbursement.[164] Gendered assumptions of work, care and dependence were built into the fabric of both policy and practice for social work and the welfare state.[165]

What this means for social work is that their claims to knowledge and expertise rooted in psychodynamic casework provided a framework for understanding that discontinuous care was harmful to child development, and that this necessary stability could not be provided by mothers outside marriage. Concurrently, social workers experienced unmarried mothers who were able to keep their children as part of their everyday practice, but particularly in the child care and welfare fields. Here, they encountered mothers who, through a lack of financial support and state assistance, were unable to provide for their child or children in material terms, making them reliant on external sources of care provided by local authority children's departments, or potentially more visible to them and punitive child welfare interventions including statutory removal as neglectful. These experiences meant that social workers routinely and consistently referred young, unmarried women to moral welfare workers in the best interests of the child and in terms of the financial and organisational priorities of the institution which employed them.

It is here that the wider accountability of the social work profession comes more clearly into view when thinking about historic forced adoption policies and practice throughout the post-war decades. Whilst social work interventions with unmarried mothers and illegitimate children through adoption came under the specialised field of moral welfare, other specialised branches worked within a system which normalised their actions, and underpinning diagnosis of social pathology, through their everyday, routine activities.

THE BRITISH ASSOCIATION OF SOCIAL WORKERS AND AN ADOPTION APOLOGY

The processes of professionalisation which led to the British Association of Social Workers and recognition of social work, its claims to knowledge and universal principles, are inextricable from casework with unmarried mothers which foregrounded adoption as being in the best interests of the child over retention. It was this which propelled coercion and force, and for which the Association owes an apology.

The creation of social work as a recognised profession with claims to knowledge and universal principles which occurred in the post-war decades is inextricable from casework with unmarried mothers and illegitimate children which saw severance, rather than retention, as being in the best interests of the child. Unmarried motherhood was positioned as a social pathology requiring intervention from the welfare state and social workers. Here, moral welfare workers were the specialised branch responsible for this activity, although they did not exist in isolation but in relation to wider fields of activity of social work and the local welfare state. Autonomy, discretion and the application of knowledge by such social workers was experienced as paternalism, judgment and coercion by young, vulnerable women who were pregnant outside marriage.

In 2023, following the Joint Committee of Human Rights inquiry into historic forced adoption and the response by the UK Government, the British Association of Social Workers issued a statement which recognised that 'adoption is a core social work task', but outlined the formal professional position of post-war adoption in principle rather than its realities and realisation. This served to disassociate the social work profession from recommendations for a public apology, and to offer a more complex understanding about the dynamics of adoption. The history and context within the statement was – like the UK Government's own response to the inquiry report and recommendations – limited at best, and ahistorical at worst, focused on discontinuities and implications for contemporary practice, emphasising the legal dimensions of adoption rather than social work practice in interpreting and shaping them. Their analysis centred on social stigma and attitudes, the loving homes of adoptive parents, and adherence to work practices and patterns at the time.[166]

Karen Balcom's 2011 study of adoption in post-war North America recognised the importance of 'understand[ing] social workers' goals and objectives from within their logic and their genuine concerns about how best to protect children and parents'. The outline offered here is not to offer an ahistorical, disconnected narrative of their practice, but to understand it on its own terms using appropriate contextualisation. Professionalisation was about recognising the value of social work, its importance in serving the purposes of the welfare state, and the skills required to undertake such work and their claims to knowledge. Understanding social work as work is important in advancing this point, and to see them in the terms of their time.

However, Balcom also recognises the need 'to be critical of the blind sports and unchallenged assumptions shaping their world views'.[167] To date, these have not been recognised. The history of social work has largely been written by its practitioners rather than professional historians, and where historians have written of the inner world and dynamics of social work, they have sought to unpack a range of assumptions under which social work operated. This is what I have

outlined in this briefing: the context for the claims to knowledge and status which position moral welfare work in the post-war decades, the role of their professional association, and their relationship within wider contours of social work practice.

Accordingly, it is on this basis that the social work profession needs to recognise its central part in the historic forced adoption of children of unmarried mothers in the three decades following the Second World War. Moral welfare work was one of the specialised branches of social work which combined with others to create its modern professional form from 1970. Its adjacent and related fields shared and worked with similar assumptions of unmarried motherhood as a social pathology which contributed to adoption as normalised and desirable as part of practice. This can be seen not in formal statements or reports which singularly and clearly outlined this state of affairs and intentions of actors, but in seeing the history of social work through its actions rather than words alone.

In 2025 the Australian Association of Social Workers 'unreservedly apologise[d]' for its role in historic forced adoption practices, based on listening to those with lived experience and their corresponding violation of human rights.[168] This followed more than a decade after Prime Minister Julia Gillard formally apologised for the role of the state in such practices in 2013.[169] Whilst the UK Government is yet to apologise, it has recognised that the state 'had a role' and is 'actively considering' an apology. [170] Whilst there are differences in terms of context and practice between Australia and the UK in terms of social work practice and unmarried mothers through moral welfare, and the colonial context of the Stolen Generations of Aboriginal children, their role was comparable and processes of professionalisation similar.[171] The existing BASW position which downplays historic violations is hard to sustain in light of actions in Australia and recognition from the UK Government. Those with lived experience cannot wait another decade for justice and recognition from the social work profession as they have in Australia as fewer will be alive to hear an apology give. Justice delayed is justice denied.

Accordingly, it was collective actions across the social work profession which propelled coercion and force in adoption practice for the children of unmarried mothers, and for which the Association owes an apology in line with the precedent set from the Australian experience.

REFERENCES

[1] James E. Cronin, *The politics of state expansion: war, state and society in twentieth-century Britain* (London: Routledge, 1991), 153-156; Tom Ling, *The British state since 1945: an introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 113-114.

[2] Angela Wollacott, 'From moral to professional authority: secularism, social work and middle-class women's self-construction in World War I Britain', *Journal of Women's History*, 10:2 (1998), 85-111.

[3] John Stewart, '"I thought you would want to come and see his home": child guidance and psychiatric social work in inter-war Britain', in Mark Jackson (ed.) *Health and the modern home* (London: Routledge, 2007), 111-127; John Stewart, 'Child guidance in Britain, 1927-1951: from voluntarism to the welfare state', in Colin Rochester, George C. Gosling, Alison Penn and Meta Zimmeck (eds.) Un*derstanding the roots of voluntary action: historical perspectives on current social policy* (Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2011), 32-47; Vicky Long, '"Often there is a good deal to be done, but socially rather than medically": the psychiatric social worker as social therapist, 1945-1970', *Medical History*, 55:2 (2011), 223-239; George C. Gosling, *Payment and philanthropy in British healthcare, 1918-48* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017).

[4] Rodney Lowe, 'Lessons from the past: the rise and fall of the classic welfare state in Britain', in Ann Oakley and A. Susan Williams (eds.) *The politics of welfare* (London: UCL Press, 1994), 37-53.

[5] Michael Lambert, '"Daddy knows best": professionalism, paternalism and the state in mid-twentieth century British child diswelfare experiences', in Caitriona Beaumont, Eve Colpus and Ruth Davidson (eds.) *Everyday welfare in modern British history: experience, expertise, activism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 119-149.

[6] Malcolm Payne, *The origins of social work: continuity and change* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); Terry Bamford, *A contemporary history of social work: learning from the past* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015); Terry Bamford and Keith Bilton (eds.) *Social work: past, present and future* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020); Ray Jones, *A history of the personal social services in England: feast, famine and the future* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2020); Steve Rogowski, *Social work: the rise and fall of a profession* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2020); Mike Burt, *A history of the roles and responsibilities of social workers: from the Poor Law to the present day* (London: Routledge, 2022); John Pierson, *A new history of social work: values and practice in the struggle for social justice* (London: Routledge, 2022)

[7] John Pierson, *Understanding social work: history and context* (Maidenhead: Open University Press, 2011), 107.

[8] Steve Rogowski, *Social work: the rise and fall of a profession* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2010), 46.

[9] Terry Bamford, *A contemporary history of social work: learning from the past* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015), 110.

[10] Robert J. Dingwall, John Eekelaar and Topsy Murray, *The protection of children: state intervention and family life* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1983), 103-121; Nigel Parton, *Governing the family: child care, child protection and the state* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1991), 49-50; Caroline Ball, 'Regulating child care: from the Children Act 1948 to the present day', *Child and Family Social Work*, 3:3 (1998), 163-171.

[11] Roy A. Parker, *Change and continuity in children's services* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015), 45-53, 69-84.

[12] John Welshman, 'Evacuation and social policy during the Second World War: myth and reality', *Twentieth Century British History*, 9:1 (1998), 28-53; John Welshman, 'Evacuation, hygiene and social policy: the *Our Towns* report of 1943', *Historical Journal*, 42:3 (1999), 781-807.

[13] Gordon Lynch, 'Pathways to the 1946 Curtis Report and the post-war reconstruction of children's out-of-home care', *Contemporary British History*, 34:1 (2020), 22-43.

[14] Nigel Parton, *The politics of child abuse* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1985), 42-45.

[15] Roy Lubove, *The professional altruist: the emergence of social work as a career, 1880-1930* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1965); Karen W. Tice, *Tales of wayward girls and immoral women: case records and the professionalisation of social work* (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1998).

[16] Noel Parry and José Parry, 'Social work, professionalism and the state', in Noel Parry, Michael Rustin and Carole Satyamurti (eds.) *Social work, welfare and the state* (London: E. Arnold, 1979), 40.

[17] Adrian L. Webb and Gerald Wistow, *Social work, social care and social planning: the personal social services since Seebohm* (London: Longman, 1987), 190-208; Philip Whitehead and Roger Statham, *The history of probation: politics, power and cultural change* (Crayford: Shaw, 2006), 18-20.

[18] Phyllida Parsloe, *The work of the probation and after-care officer* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 21-22.

[19] Charles L. Mowat, *The Charity Organisation Society, 1869-1913: its ideas and work* (London: Methuen, 1961); Judith Fido, 'The COS and social casework in London, 1869-1900', in A. P. Donajgrodzki (ed.) *Social control in nineteenth century Britain* (London: Croom Helm, 1977), 207-230; Jane Lewis, '"No alms but a friend": social work, poverty and relief in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries', in Josh Schwieso and Phil Petit (eds.) *Aspects of the history of British social work* (Reading: Reading University Faculty of Education and Community Studies, 1995), 124-147; Robert Humphreys, *Poor relief and charity, 1869-1945: the London Charity Organisation Society* (Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2001), 137-160; Mark Peel, *Miss Cutler and the case of the resurrected horse: social work and the story of poverty in America, Australia and Britain* (Chicago, IL: Chicago University Press 2011).

[20] Karen Winter and Viv Cree, 'Social work home visits to children and families in the UK: a Foucauldian perspective', *British Journal of Social Work*, 46:5 (2016), 1182.

[21] Madeline Rooff, *A hundred years of family welfare: a study of the Family Welfare Association (formerly Charity Organisation Society), 1869-1969* (London: Michael Joseph, 1972), 300-305.

[22] Jane Lewis, *The voluntary sector, the state and social work in Britain: the Charity Organisation Society/Family Welfare Association since 1869* (Aldershot: Elgar, 1995), 105.

[23] Michael Rustin, 'Social work and the family', in Noel Parry, Michael Rustin and Carole Satyamurti (eds.) *Social work, welfare and the state* (London: E. Arnold, 1979), 140.

[24] Pat Starkey, 'Mental incapacity, ill health and poverty: family failure in post-war Britain', in Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey (eds.) *Child welfare and social action in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: international perspectives* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 268.

[25] Robert Pinker, 'Social welfare and the education of social workers', in Philip Bean and Stewart MacPherson (eds.) *Approaches to welfare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 150-166; Pat Starkey, 'Kind-hearted and good with people – or skilled professionals? Social work training at the University of Liverpool', *Transactions of the Historic Society of Lancashire and Cheshire*, 155 (2006), 65-84.

[26] John A. Stroud, *Child care officers and their world* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1965), 36.

[27] Noel Timms, *Casework in the child care service* (London: Butterworths, 1962), 38-56.

[28] Beatrice E. Pollard, *Social casework for the state: a study of the principle of client independence in the matrimonial work of probation officers* (London: Pall Mall Press, 1962), 10.

[29] Selina Todd, 'Family welfare and social work in post-war England, 1948-1970', *English Historical Review*, 129:537 (2014), 383; interview between J. Welshman and O. Stevenson, 20 July 2006 cited in J. Welshman, *From transmitted deprivation to social exclusion* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012), 144; Robert Pinker, 'Social welfare and the

education of social workers', in Philip Bean and Stewart MacPherson (eds.) *Approaches to welfare* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1983), 154.

[30] David Burnham, *The social worker speaks: a history of social workers through the twentieth century* (Farnham: Ashgate, 2012), 117-131.

[31] Geoffrey Finlayson, *Citizen, state and social welfare in Britain, 1830-1990* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1994).

[32] Geoffrey Sherington and Chris Jeffrey, *Fairbridge: Empire and child migration* (London: Woburn, 1998); Gordon Lynch, *UK child migration to Australia, 1945-1970: a study in policy failure* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2021).

[33] Kate Bradley, *Poverty, philanthropy and the state: charities and the working classes in London, 1918-79* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009).

[34] Pat Starkey, *Families and social workers: The Family Service Units, 1940-1985* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2000).

[35] Philip Seed, *The expansion of social work in Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 63-69.

[36] John Welshman, 'The social history of social work: the issue of the "problem family", 1940-70', *British Journal of Social Work*, 29:3 (1999), 457-476; Julie Grier, 'A spirit of "friendly rivalry"? Voluntary societies and the formation of post-war child welfare legislation in Britain', in Jon Lawrence and Pat Starkey (eds.) *Child welfare and social action in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries: international perspectives* (Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2001), 234-255.

[37] John Stewart, 'The mixed economy of welfare in historical context', in Martin Powell (ed.) *Understanding the mixed economy of welfare* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2019), 21-40.

[38] John E. Mayer and Noel Timms, *The client speaks: working class impressions of casework* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1970), 15

[39] Peter Boss, *Social policy and the young delinquent* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), 90.

[40] Joel F. Handler, *The coercive social worker: British lessons for American social services* (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1973); Carole Satyamurti, *Occupational survival: the case of the local authority social worker* (Oxford: Blackwell).

[41] Ian Butler and Mark Drakeford, *Social work on trial: the Colwell inquiry and the state of welfare* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2012).

[42] Michael Lipsky, *Street-level bureaucracy: dilemmas of the individual in public services* (New York: Russell Sage, 1980); Viv Cree, *From public streets to private lives: the changing task of social work* (Aldershot: Avebury, 1995); Anthony Evans, 'Discretion and street-level bureaucracy theory: a case study of local authority social work', unpublished PhD thesis, Warwick University, 2006; Mike Rowe, *Researching street-level bureaucracy: bringing out the interpretive dimensions* (London: Routledge, 2025).

[43] J. A. G. Griffith, *Central departments and local authorities* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), 424-431, 488-492; Kevin Theakston, *The civil service since 1945* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 1995), 43; Virginia Noble, *Inside the welfare state: foundations of policy and practice in post-war Britain* (London: Routledge, 2009), 1-13.

Griffith, J. A. G., *Central departments and local authorities* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966)

[44] Philip Seed, *The expansion of social work in Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1973), 44.

[45] Peter Boss, *Exploration into child care* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1971), 110.

[46] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 228.

[47] Barbara N. Rodgers and June Stevenson, *A new portrait of social work: a study of the social services in a northern town from Younghusband to Seebohm* (London: Heinemann, 1973), 331-351; Tom Ling, *The British state since 1945: an introduction* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1998), 115-17.

[48] Bill Jordan, 'Families and personal social services', in Robert N. Rapoport, Michael P. Fogarty and Rhona Rapoport (eds.) *Families in Britain* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982), 447-458.

[49] Frederic Seebohm, *Report on local authority and allied personal social services* (London: HMSO, 1968),

[50] Eileen Younghusband, *Report on the employment and training of social workers* (Edinburgh: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1947); Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: a supplementary report on the employment and training of social workers* (Edinburgh: Carnegie United Kingdom Trust, 1951).

[51] Eileen Younghusband, *Report of the working party on social workers in local authority health and welfare services* (London: HMSO, 1959).

[52] Pheoebe Hall, *Reforming the welfare: the politics of change in the personal social services* (London: Heinemann, 1976), 58-80.

[53] Charles Webster, *The health services since the war, volume II: government and health care: the National Health Service, 1958-1979* (London: HMSO, 1996), 304.

[54] Margaret Bromley, 'The role of voluntary adoption societies in adoption services', in Philip Bean (ed.) *Adoption: essays in social policy, law and sociology* (London: Tavistock, 1984), 32.

[55] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 3.

[56] Kathleen Jones, *Eileen Younghusband: a biography* (London: Bedford Square Press, 1984)

[57] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 228.

[58] Jane Lewis, 'Women and late-nineteenth-century social work', in Carol Smart (ed.) *Regulating womanhood: historical essays on marriage, motherhood and sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 78-99; Brian Williams, 'Social work with prisoners in England and Wales: from missionary zeal to street-level bureaucracy', in in Josh Schwieso and Phil Petit (eds.) *Aspects of the history of British social work* (Reading: Reading University Faculty of Education and Community Studies, 1995), 21-65.

[59] Timothy W. Jones, 'Social motherhood and spiritual authority in a secularising age: moral welfare work in the Church of England, 1883-1961', *Feminist Theology*, 23:2 (2015), 147.

[60] Timothy W. Jones, 'Social motherhood and spiritual authority in a secularising age: moral welfare work in the Church of England, 1883-1961', *Feminist Theology*, 23:2 (2015), 151.

[61] Barbara Wootton, *Social science and social pathology* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1959), 37-8, 50-1, 120

[62] Jane Lewis and John Welshman, 'The issue of never-married motherhood in Britain, 1920-70', *Social History of Medicine*, 10:3 (1997), 409-10.

[63] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume one* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 204-5.

[64] Jean Pochin, *Without a wedding-ring: casework with unmarried parents* (London: Constable, 1969), 3-11.

[65] Regina G. Kunzel, *Fallen women, problem girls: unmarried mothers and the professionalisation of social work 1890-1945* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1993).

[66] Regina G. Kunzel, 'Constructing out-of-wedlock pregnancy in the wartime and postwar United States', in Joanne J. Meyerowitz (ed.) *Not June Cleaver: women and gender in postwar America, 1945-1960* (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 1994), 305.

[67] Stefania Bernini, *Family life and individual welfare in post-war Europe* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), 108-130

[68] Barbara N. Rodgers and June Dixon, *Portrait of social work: a study of social services in a Northern town* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1960), 140-141; M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 29-30, 47-48; Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume one* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 218.

[69] Martine Spensky, 'Producers of legitimacy: homes for unmarried mothers in the 1950s', in Carol Smart (ed.) *Regulating womanhood: historical essays on marriage, motherhood and sexuality* (London: Routledge, 1992), 106-109.

[70] Michael Peplar, *Family matters: a history of ideas about the family since 1945* (London: Longman, 2002), 18; Pat Thane, 'Family life and "normality" in postwar British culture', in Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann (eds.) *Life after death: approaches to a cultural and social history of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), 193-210.

[71] Pat Thane, *Happy Families? History and family policy* (London: British Academy, 2011).

[72] Harry Hendrick, *Narcissistic parenting in an insecure world: a history of parenting culture 1920s to present* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2016), 63-64.

[73] Leontine Young, *Out of wedlock: a study of the problems of the unmarried mother and her child* (New York, NY: McGraw-Hill, 1954), 21.

[74] Denise Riley, *War in the nursery: theories of the child and mother* (London: Virago, 1983), 109.

[75] Mathew Thomson, *Lost freedom: the landscape of the child and the British post-war settlement* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013), 88.

[76] Michael Lambert, '"Problem families" and the post-war welfare state in the North West of England, 1943-1974', unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 2017, 119-121; Michael Lambert, 'Choice, consent and coercion: understanding the supply and demand of infants for adoption during Britain's baby scoop era', *Adoption and Fostering*, accepted and forthcoming on a special issue marking 100 years since the 1926 Adoption Act.

[77] John Bowlby, 'Maternal care and mental health', *Bulletin of the World Health Organisation*, 3 (1951), 233-533.

[78] John Bowlby, *Child care and the growth of love* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 113.

[79] John Bowlby, *Child care and the growth of love* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 114.

[80] John Bowlby, *Child care and the growth of love* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972), 124.

[81] Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 96.

[82] Lambeth Palace Archives, London: MWC/Min/M/2 Moral Welfare Council, 'Adoption Policy', 5 November 1953.

[83] Christine Hallett and Olive Stevenson, *Child abuse: aspects of interprofessional cooperation* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1980), 1-10.

[84] David V. Donnison, *The neglected child and the social services: a study into the work done in Manchester and Salford by social services of all kinds for 118 families whose children came into public care* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1954), 16.

[85] British Medical Association and Magistrates Association Joint Committee, *Cruelty to and neglect of children: report of a joint committee of the British Medical Association and Magistrates Association* (London: British Medical Association, 1956), 33.

[86] Margot Jefferys, *An anatomy of social welfare services: a survey of social welfare staff and their clients in the county of Buckinghamshire* (London: Michael Joseph, 1965), 252.

[87] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 182.

[88] The National Archives, Kew: MH 55/1653 Ministry of Health, 'The care of illegitimate children', 1 October 1943.

[89] The National Archives, Kew: MH 55/1653 Welsh Board of Health, 'The care of illegitimate children', 1 October 1943 and Department of Health for Scotland, 'Illegitimate children and their mothers', 17 October 1945.

[90] Jean S. Heywood, *Children in care: the development of the service for the deprived child* (London: Routledge, 1978), 135.

[91] Eileen Younghusband, *Report of the working party on social workers in the local authority health and welfare services* (London: HMSO, 1959), 43

[92] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/9/1/1 Moral Welfare Workers' Association, Memorandum for submission to the Working Party on Social Workers, 1955, 1.

[93] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 88-91.

[94] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 57-58.

[95] Pat Thane and Tanya Evans, *Sinners? Scroungers? Saints? Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012), 57.

[96] Eileen Younghusband, *Report of the working party on social workers in the local authority health and welfare services* (London: HMSO, 1959), 116.

[97] Jill Nicholson, *Mother and baby homes: a survey of homes for unmarried mothers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), 31-33.

[98] The National Archives, Kew: MH 134/67 Dorothy W. Doyle Minute for Mr Woodlock and Mr Michael Reed, 9 July 1952; The National Archives, Kew: MH 55/2330 'Survey of homes for unmarried mothers and their babies', 10 August 1961, 2; The National Archives, Kew: AST 36/593 Department of Health and Social Security, Home Office, Scottish Home and Health Department, Ministry of Housing and Local Government and General Register Office, 'Report of working party of officials on illegitimacy and the problems of unmarried mothers and their children', December 1969, 30-35.

[99] The National Archives, Kew: MH 77/225 R. Gedling Minute for Mr Brown, 6 February 1948; Paul A. Welsby, *A history of the Church of England 1945-1980* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 15-18.

[100] Margaret Kornitzer, *Child adoption in the modern world* (London: Putnam, 1952), 53-92; Iris Goodacre, *Adoption policy and practice: a study* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1966), 28-138; Jane Rowe, *Parents, children and adoption: a handbook for adoption workers* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 87-280.

[101] Alexina McWhinnie, 'Adoption', in John Stroud (ed.) *Services for children and their families: aspects of child care for social workers* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1973), 153-154, 157-160.

[102] Michael Lambert, 'Choice, consent and coercion: understanding the supply and demand of infants for adoption during Britain's baby scoop era', *Adoption and Fostering*, accepted and forthcoming on a special issue marking 100 years since the 1926 Adoption Act.

[103] Jane Lewis, *What price community medicine? Philosophy, practice and politics of public health since 1919* (Brighton: Wheatsheaf, 1986), 108; John Welshman, 'Family visitors or social workers? Health visiting and public health in England and Wales, 1890-1974', *International Journal for the History of Nursing*, 2:4 (1997), 18; Gillian Clark, 'The role of mother and baby homes in the adoption of children born outside marriage in twentieth-century England and Wales', *Family and Community History*, 11:1 (2008), 53-54.

[104] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 253.

[105] Sheffield City Archives, Sheffield: CA-HEA/1/33 Sheffield Health Committee, Minutes, 20 December 1949, 27 June 1950, 24 October 1950 and 28 November 1950.

[106] The National Archives, Kew: MH 112/79 E. M. King, 'Durham County Council', 13 August 1958, 8.

[107] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 229.

[108] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 151.

[109] Janet Greenlees, '"The peculiar and complex female problem": The Church of Scotland and health care for unwed mothers, 1900-1948', in Janet Greenlees and Linda Bryder (eds.) *Western maternity and medicine, 1880-1990* (London: Pickering and Chatto, 2014), 59.

[110] Anne Eyre, 'Religion and welfare: a sociological study of Church and state in Liverpool', unpublished PhD thesis, University of Liverpool, 1988, 226.

[111] Michael Lambert, '"Problem families" and the post-war welfare state in the North West of England, 1943-1974', unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 2017, 145-146.

[112] Jill Nicholson, *Mother and baby homes: a survey of homes for unmarried mothers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), 141-149; Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 231-232.

[113] The National Archives, Kew: BN 29/2663 Committee on Staffing of Residential Homes and Institutions (Williams), 2nd oral session, 7 April 1964.

[114] Michael Lambert, 'Off the record: lived experience and historical narratives of forced adoption in Britain', in Barbora Adlerova, Stephen Ashe and Marai Larasi (eds.) *The politics of lived experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, accepted and forthcoming).

[115] Russell L. Whiting, 'From Church work to social work and beyond: a study of the involvement of the Churches in the social work profession in Britain', unpublished PhD thesis, Goldsmiths College University of London, 2003, 40-44

[116] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 159

[117] Park Starkey, 'Can the piper call the tune? Innovation and experiment with deprived families in Britain, 1940-1980s: the work of the Family Service Units', *British Journal of Social Work*, 32:5 (2002), 573-587.

[118] S. Kenneth Ruck, *London government and the welfare services* (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1963), 83-84.

[119] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume two* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978), 233.

[120] MSS.378/MWWA/M/9/2/1 Moral Welfare Workers' Association, Evidence to the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services, 1966, 1.

[121] Jenny Keating, *A child for keeps? The history of adoption in England, 1918-1945* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009), 151

[122] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/1/1/1 Frances Martin, 'History of the Moral Welfare Workers' Association', 1963, 1.

[123] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/1/1/1 Frances Martin, 'History of the Moral Welfare Workers' Association', 1963, 2.

[124] Timoty W. Jones, *Sexual politics in the Church of England, 1857-1957* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012; Callum G. Brown, *The battle for Christian Britain: sex, humanists and secularisation, 1945-1980* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2019).

[125] Leslie Paul, *A church by daylight: a reappraisement of the Church of England and its future* (London: Chapman, 1973), 266.

[126] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/1/1/1 Frances Martin, 'History of the Moral Welfare Workers' Association', 1963, 3-4.

[127] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/9/1/1 Moral Welfare Workers' Association, Memorandum for submission to the Working Party on Social Workers, 1955 and MSS.378/MWWA/M/9/2/1 Moral Welfare Workers' Association, Evidence to the Committee on Local Authority and Allied Personal Social Services, 1966

[128] Roy A. Parker, *Change and continuity in children's services* (Bristol: Policy Press, 2015), 3-4.

[129] Pat Thane, 'Voluntary action in the "welfare state": the National Council for the Unmarried Mother and her Child', in Alan Kidd and Melanie Tebbutt (eds.) *People, places and identities: themes in British social and cultural history, 1700s-1980s* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2017), 132-151.

[130] Gerald Hurst, *Report of the departmental committee on the adoption of children* (London: HMSO, 1954); William Houghton, *Report of the departmental committee on the adoption of children* (London: HMSO, 1972); Gwyneth Roberts, 'Social and legal policy in child adoption in England and Wales, 1913-1958', unpublished PhD thesis, Leicester University, 1973, 361-376; Jatinder Sandhu, 'The birth mother and the evolution of adoption policy and practice in England since 1926', unpublished PhD thesis, 2012, 21-30.

[131] The National Archives, Kew: BN 29/84 Home Office, Church of England Moral Welfare Council: co-operation with Home Office, 1959-65; MH 55/1510 Ministry of Health, Mother and baby homes: surveys, 1949-60; Lambeth Palace Archives, London: Lambeth Palace Archives, London: MWC/Min/M/2 Moral Welfare Council, Minutes, 1949-55.

[132] Michael Lambert, 'Social work archives and the "classic" postwar British welfare state', *Exchanges*, 11:4 (2024), 142-176.

[133] Joanna Penberthy, 'Church, state and society', in Norman Doe (ed.) *A new history of the Church in Wales: governance and ministry, theology and society* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2020), 307.

[134] Modern Records Centre, Warwick University, Coventry: MSS.378/MWWA/M/10/1/8 Moral Welfare Workers' Association, Report of a study group set up by the Moral Welfare Workers' Association, 1969, 1.

[135] Eileen Younghusband, *Report of the working party on social workers in local authority health and welfare services* (London: HMSO, 1959), 42.

[136] M. Penelope Hall and Ismene V. Howes, *The church in social work: a study of moral welfare work undertaken by the Church of England* (London: Routledge, 1965), 246.

[137] Jane Lewis, *Women in Britain since 1945: women, family, work and the state in the post-war years* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992), 18; Helen Jones, *Health and society in twentieth-century Britain* (London: Longman, 1994), 128; Wendy Webster, *Imagining home: gender, race and national identity* (London: UCL Press, 1998), 94.

[138] Josh Schwieso and Phil Pettit, 'Aspects of the history of social work', in Josh Schwieso and Phil Petit (eds.) *Aspects of the history of British social work* (Reading: Reading University Faculty of Education and Community Studies, 1995), 10.

[139] Martin Davies, 'Social work, the state and the university', *British Journal of Social Work*, 11:2 (1981), 284

[140] Michael Lambert, '"Daddy knows best": professionalism, paternalism and the state in mid-twentieth century British child diswelfare experiences', in Caitriona Beaumont, Eve Colpus and Ruth Davidson (eds.) *Everyday welfare in modern British history: experience, expertise, activism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2024), 119-149.

[141] Jatinder Sandhu, 'The birth mother and the evolution of adoption policy and practice in England since 1926', unpublished PhD thesis, 2012, 116.

[142] Jatinder Sandhu, 'The birth mother and the evolution of adoption policy and practice in England since 1926', unpublished PhD thesis, 2012, 238.

[143] Jatinder Sandhu, 'The birth mother and the evolution of adoption policy and practice in England since 1926', unpublished PhD thesis, 2012, 238.

[144] Michael Lambert, 'Off the record: lived experience and historical narratives of forced adoption in Britain', in Barbora Adlerova, Stephen Ashe and Marai Larasi (eds.) *The politics of lived experience* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, accepted and forthcoming).

[145] Michael Lambert, '"Problem families" and the post-war welfare state in the North West of England, 1943-1974', unpublished PhD thesis, Lancaster University, 2017.

[146] Gerald A. J. de Montigny, *Social working: an ethnography of front line practice* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1995), 216.

[147] Jean Packman, *Child care needs and numbers* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1968), 216-221; H. Rudolf Schaffer and Evelyn B. Schaffer, *Child care and the family: a study of short term care* (London: Bell, 1968), 16.

[148] Eileen Younghusband, *Social work in Britain: 1950-1975: a follow-up study, volume one* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1978) 45-46.

[149] Bleddyn Davies, Andrew Barton and Ian McMillan, *Variations in children's services among British urban authorities: a causal analysis* (London: Bell, 1972), 34-40

[150] Jean Packman, *The child's generation: child care policy in Britain* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1981), 87-94.

[151] Gillian Clark, 'The role of mother and baby homes in the adoption of children born outside marriage in twentieth-century England and Wales', *Family and Community History*, 11:1 (2008), 57.

[152] Alexina McWhinnie, 'Adoption', in John Stroud (ed.) *Services for children and their families: aspects of child care for social workers* (Oxford: Pergamon Press, 1973), 163-164.

[153] Michael Lambert, 'Choice, consent and coercion: understanding the supply and demand of infants for adoption during Britain's baby scoop era', *Adoption and Fostering*, accepted and forthcoming on a special issue marking 100 years since the 1926 Adoption Act.

[154] Gwyneth Roberts, 'Social and legal policy in child adoption in England and Wales, 1913-1958', unpublished PhD thesis, Leicester University, 1973, 347-350.

[155] Gillian Clark, 'The role of mother and baby homes in the adoption of children born outside marriage in twentieth-century England and Wales', *Family and Community History*, 11:1 (2008), 57.

[156] Michael J. Hill, 'The exercise of discretion in the National Assistance Board', *Public Administration*, 47:1 (1969), 83.

[157] Jane Streather and Stuart Weir, *Social insecurity: single mothers on benefit* (London: Child Poverty Action Group, 1974), 10, 18-23.

[158] Rosalind Marshall, *Families receiving supplementary benefit: a study comparing the circumstances of some fatherless families and families of the long-term sick and unemployed* (London: HMSO, 1972), 34-42.

[159] Olive Stevenson, *Claimant or client? A social worker's view of the Supplementary Benefits Commission* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1973), 136-137.

[160] Elsa Ferri and Hilary Robinson, *Coping alone* (Slough: National Foundation for Educational Research, 1976), 71.

[161] Dennis Marsden, *Mothers alone: poverty and the fatherless family* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973).

[162] Kate Morris, Will Mason, Paul Bywaters, Brid Featherstone, Brigid Daniel, Geraldine Brady, Lisa Bunting, Jade Hooper, Nughmana Mirza, Jonathan Scourfield and Calum Webb, 'Social work, poverty and child welfare interventions', *Child and Family Social Work*, 23:3 (2018), 370.

[163] Pat Thane, 'Unmarried motherhood in twentieth-century England', *Women's History Review*, 20:1 (2011), 23.

[164] Jane Lewis, 'The problem of lone-mother families in twentieth-century Britain', *Journal of Social Welfare and Family Law*, 20:3 (1998), 259-65.

[165] Dennis Marsden, 'Fatherless families on National Assistance', in Peter Townsend (ed.) *The concept of poverty: working papers on methods of investigation and life-styles of the poor in different countries* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 216.

[166] 'BASW Statement on Forced Adoption', July 2023. Available from: https://basw.co.uk/sites/default/files/resources/basw_statement_on_forced_adoption-_july_2023_0.pdf.

[167] Karen A. Balcom, *The traffic in babies: cross-border adoption and baby-selling between the United States and Canada, 1930-1972* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2011), 12.

[168] 'AASW Historical Forced Adoption Practices Apology', 18 June 2025. Available from: https://www.aasw.asn.au/aasw-historical-forced-adoption-practices-apology/.

[169] Julia Gillard, 'National Apology for Forced Adoptions', 21 March 2013. Available from: https://pmtranscripts.pmc.gov.au/release/transcript-19165.

[170] Josh MacAlister oral evidence to Education Committee hearing on Historical Forced Adoption, 10 March 2026. Available here: https://committees.parliament.uk/event/26767/formal-meeting-oral-evidence-session/.

[171] Philip Mendes, 'The history of social work in Australia: a critical literature review', *Australian Social Work*, 58:2 (2005), 121-131; Fiona Davis, 'Put down your knitting: unpicking social welfare professionalisation in 1970s Australia', *Journal of Australian Studies*, 41:2 (2017), 222-236; Nilan Yu, 'Interrogating social work: Australian social work and the Stolen Generations', *Journal of Social Work*, 19:6 (2019), 736-750.