“Student mothers in Higher Education: two (and more) for the price of one – widening participation and tackling child poverty” – Prof. Claire Callender

This paper explores two, usually separate but interconnected, set of policies: one on widening participation and social mobility, and the other on tackling child poverty and inequality. It does this by calling on the findings from a study which assessed part-time undergraduate courses targeted at low-income mothers, delivered in Sure Start Children's Centres, and run by Birkbeck, University of London and the Open University. By focusing on the perceived benefits of study and their effects on the lives of the mothers, and especially their children's educational trajectories, the paper examines how these two policies, and the thinking underpinning them, can be brought together. It argues that these courses helped widen mothers’ access to HE. Their transformational and liberating nature, through the academic study of social sciences, enabled and encouraged these mother’s involvement and engagement with their children’s learning and education. Such courses, therefore, also have the potential to improve their children’s educational attainment. This raises issues about the purpose of HE. It brings into question the widely asserted assumption that universities have a limited role to play in tackling the socio-economic gap in children’s underachievement.

Wednesday 2nd December
1.30-2.30pm

UCL Institute of Education
20 Bedford Way, London,
WC1H 0AL

If you have any queries please contact Anna Leamon anna.leamon@ucl.ac.uk

Professor Claire Callender is Professor of Higher Education Studies at UCL Institute of Education and at Birkbeck, University of London. She is Deputy Director of the ESRC/HEFCE Centre for Global Higher Education (CGHE) and heads up one of its three research programmes. Her research and writing have focused on student finances in higher education and related issues. She has contributed to the most significant committees of inquiries into student funding in the UK, and been influential in shaping policy.

To book your place, please visit http://www.tfaforms.com/377476