

**Researchers at the Centre for Appearance Research (CAR) at UWE, Bristol are being supported by the VTCT Foundation to work with the charities involved in the Appearance Collective (AC) to provide evidence-based psychosocial support for people affected by visible differences.**

### Acknowledging this Challenging Time

We hope you and your staff are all well in these difficult and uncertain times.

The team of researchers at CAR who are supported by the VTCT Foundation have been working from home since 17th March, with regular teleconferencing to keep in touch.

Unfortunately we have had to put some studies on hold for the time being, but are continuing to review how the situation is impacting our work as the situation evolves. Otherwise it is very much business as usual.

We have started some new studies to examine the impact of COVID-19 from the perspective of people whose lives are affected by visible difference, and we'll look forward to sharing those findings with you in due course.

We are all still contactable through email, so please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any queries about current projects, or would like to discuss ideas for how we can work to support you in the future.

In the light of the current advice from the UK government about the COVID-19 pandemic, we've decided to postpone our Appearance Matters 9 conference. This will now be held 13-15 July 2021 in Bath- we look forward to welcoming you then.

*Diana Harcourt*

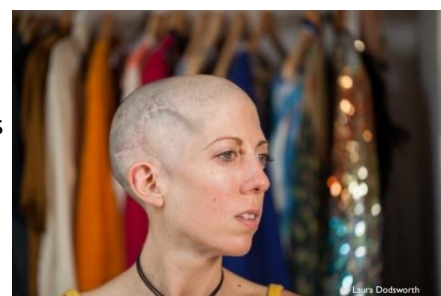
### 'Scars' a new film, in association with CAR

You may have seen that a new film titled 'Scars' has been released by The Guardian. The documentary meets 5 different people for whom their scars changed forever how they see the world, and how the world sees them.

We have launched [a brief online study](#) to examine how the film might impact people's attitudes towards appearance (including altered appearances and visible differences). We would appreciate it if you could share this study with your members, and look forward to sharing the findings with you.

We are also planning a Q&A with one of the film makers, Laura Dodsworth - more details to follow.

Click [here](#) to watch the film.



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### Some of our recent publications

Sharratt, N.D., Williamson, H., Zuchelli, F., Kiff, J., & The VTCTF Research Team at the Centre for Appearance Research (2020). "Becoming known: disclosure and exposure of (in)visible difference" *Stigma and Health*. Pre-print available from the UWE repository [here](#).

Zuchelli, F., White, P., Williamson, H., & The VTCTF Research Team at the Centre for Appearance Research (2020) Experiential avoidance and cognitive fusion mediate the relationship between body evaluation and unhelpful body image coping strategies in individuals with visible differences. *Body Image*. 32, 121-127. Click [here](#) to read.

### Findings from a VTCTF Small Grants Project- Educating the general population about vitiligo



Emma Rush from Vitiligo Support UK and CAR researchers

Georgia Treneman-Evans, Ella Guest, and Amy Slater investigated the most effective ways to educate the public about vitiligo.

They tested whether it is possible to improve knowledge, reduce stigma, and increase acceptance of appearance diversity by giving 117 people from the general public educational information about vitiligo through emails or via an Instagram account with personalised posts and photos of individuals with vitiligo.

They found that people's knowledge increased and stigma towards visible differences decreased in both the email and Instagram groups. Their feedback from participants also suggested that Instagram can be an accessible and engaging platform to learn about appearance-altering conditions, and that it made participants think about what it's like to live with vitiligo.

These findings suggest that making the general population more aware of what vitiligo is can increase their understanding of the condition and change negative attitudes towards appearance-altering conditions. Additionally, social media can be a useful, freely available platform to educate the public about visible differences.

For further information about this study, please contact Ella Guest ([Ella.Guest@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Ella.Guest@uwe.ac.uk)).

### Findings from a study exploring the experiences of parents of children with appearance affecting conditions or injuries

A research study conducted by Maia Thornton, a PhD student at CAR, explored the experiences of parents of children with appearance affecting conditions or injuries. Maia interviewed 20 parents and 11 health and support professionals from Appearance Collective organisations. 25 parents also took part in focus groups during an Appearance Collective charity event. Thank you for the support of all the Appearance Collective organisations involved in this study!

This study found that parents of children with a range of conditions and injuries had similar experiences when caring for their children. Many parents spoke about times of distress and stress, often related to the initial shock of their child's diagnosis or injury. Another finding was that parents were concerned about their child experiencing social challenges, such as teasing or bullying. Parents emphasised the importance of building resilience and confidence in their children, to help them manage any difficulties they may encounter.

These findings have really helped us to better understand the experience of parents and what is important to them when supporting their child. These results have also helped us to design an online survey which will explore these experiences in a larger number of parents. This survey will be open for participation soon, so watch this space!

For further information about this research please contact Maia Thornton ([Maia.thornton@uwe.ac.uk](mailto:Maia.thornton@uwe.ac.uk)).



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