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TITLE: A 'Grey Standard'? Reining in the Fugitive Literature in Youth Sociology

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Youth sociologists produce and consume a wide array of 'fugitive' or grey literature. Reports, evaluations, conference papers, briefings, working and discussion papers are useful in providing timely research, geared to wider audiences and that can have greater policy influence than commercially published journal articles and books (Lawrence et al., 2014). In the neoliberal university, 'outreach writing' (as described by Raewyn Connell) falls outside of managerial definitions of 'productivity'. At the same time, communicating research and public engagement is required to demonstrate research relevance.

In spite of the ubiquity of grey literature, surprisingly little attention has been paid to assessing its quality and usefulness, particularly in the field of youth sociology. This presentation reflects upon our search and appraisal of grey literature on youth foyers—a form of integrated support for young people experiencing homelessness. Even when using broad criteria, we encountered challenges in assessing this material. Unable to draw on relevant standards for distinguishing grey literature in terms of quality, we explore the possibility of a new 'grey standard' to build a more inclusive, yet still rigorous, evidence base for the field of youth sociology.