



Thank You Social Workers

Thursday 26th November 2020

Online at www.socialworkawards.com

#SWA20 #BeInspired

A special thanks to our sponsors

Headline sponsor



Corporate sponsors



Programme sponsors



Story sponsors



A message from our Board of Trustees

Thank you.

Thank you for taking the time in your busy schedules to join us today. Thank you for your tireless support of the most vulnerable people in your communities. Thank you for your team spirit, and for supporting your co-workers. And thank you for evolving your practice to find a way through in these most challenging of times.

Inclusiveness is at the heart of social work and we wanted to create an event for 2020 which would be as inclusive as possible to social workers of all kinds. This is not a time to separate people through judging. Each one of you has faced your own challenges and confronted your own vulnerabilities during the pandemic, while day-after-day you have continued to help the people who are most in need in our society to find a way through.

We are not here to create a narrative of heroism, but rather a safe space to acknowledge all your many and varied experiences. Since we began our Social Work Stories project a few months ago we have heard stories of compassionate and kind social work. They tell of a reflective and thoughtful profession trying to find ways to practice in accordance with its values at a time when many people are experiencing great stress and ongoing systemic injustice.

So, we extend a warm welcome to you all as you join us online to explore experiences of social work in 2020; the challenges, the ingenuity of adapting practice and the impact of your work on people with lived experience of social work support.

We hope that when you leave our event, you go feeling seen and feeling valued because what you do matters, and you matter. Stay safe and look after yourselves.

Finally, we would like to thank our sponsors for making this event possible. We had an idea and you have supported us above and beyond what we could have dared to hope for to make it a reality.



The Board of Trustees

From top (L-R): James Rook, Ana Popovici, Rob Mitchell, Peter Hay CBE, Jessica Beach and Gary Spencer-Humphrey.

Welcome to Thank You Social Workers

A virtual event from the Social Worker of the Year Awards charity.

This year the resilience and determination displayed by social workers has been nothing short of incredible. Alongside balancing your own personal safety, worries and wellbeing, you have all continued to safeguard and support vulnerable adults, children and families in your communities.

During the pandemic social workers and social work teams across the country have taken the time to share with us their hopes, fears and thoughts as part of our 'Social Work Stories' initiative.

As we read your stories we have felt moved, humbled and absolutely proud. Proud of our profession and proud of all that you have achieved in this trying time.

These heartfelt stories inspired us to create this Thank You Social Workers event. Our goal for today's event is for social work professionals to come together for an inclusive, virtual, thank you – and for collective reflection and recognition of the unique challenges, bravery, and dedication of all social workers during Covid-19.

What to expect

Within this programme you will find messages of support and thanks from our sponsors; without their help, this event would not have been possible.

You will also find a selection of just some of the amazing 'Social Work Stories' we have received over the past few months. These stories, and many more, can be found on our website.

Many of you will have received a special goody bag as an extra thank you, containing plenty of treats to enjoy. These goody bags have been filled thanks to the generous donations of some amazing UK companies including: Eat Real, Kind, The Protein Ball Co, The Great British Porridge Co, Cedar's Gin, Stokes sauces, Hippeas, and Misfits Health.

Get involved and you could win a prize!

Your goody bag includes a special #SWA20 selfie card for you to use during the event. We will be offering a prize for the most creative photo taken with these, so get snapping, tweeting and tagging!

Inside this programme, we have also hidden a secret golden star on one of the pages. The first three people to find the star and tweet us a picture of the page will win a very special prize too.

Finally, thank you for joining us for this special event, dedicated to each and every one of you who are here and those who couldn't join us. We hope you enjoy the event.

Please get involved in the event on Twitter by tagging @socialworkaward and include the hashtags **#SWA20 #BeInspired**. We may not be able to see you in person but we would love to see some photos of you joining in at home.



**Left to right:
At the 2019 Awards:**

Peter Hay CBE (Chair of Trustees),
Beverley Williams MBE (Founding
Patron), Louise Pashley, Rotherham
Metropolitan Borough Council (Overall Winner,
2019), Lorraine Pascale (Patron and Host
Presenter), James Rook (Trustee and Title Sponsor)

FOUNDER, PATRONS AND RETIRING TRUSTEES

We'd like to say thank you to our Founding Patron,
Beverley Williams MBE (we wouldn't be here without
you!) and to our Patrons (pictured right, from the top)
Lorraine Pascale, Tim Loughton MP, Emma Lewell-Buck MP
and The Baroness Howarth of Breckland OBE who continue
to support us.

Also thank you to Joanna Nicolas and Brian Walsh OBE
who stepped down from The Board of Trustees during 2020.
We have just finished recruiting some new Trustees and will
have some exciting announcements to make soon.



**The 2019 event at
the Royal London
Lancaster Hotel**



SOCIAL CARE CAREER OPPORTUNITIES.

Whilst many aspects of life have been put on hold, we want you to know that social care recruitment hasn't.

Now, more than ever, local authorities across the UK are leaning on Sanctuary Personnel. They are actively looking to recruit qualified social work professionals just like you to safeguard vulnerable children, young people and adults.

Councils trust us to find just the right person every single time. That's why you'll always be recommended social work jobs that are an ideal match.

Every interaction we have with our community, no matter how small, matters. That's why our candidate satisfaction score continues to climb. At Sanctuary, excellent service is how we measure ourselves.

sanctuarypersonnel.com

MAKING LIGHT WORK OF FINDING YOUR IDEAL ROLE.



Direct access to hundreds of new roles added daily



Personal job alerts based on your exact preferences



Support of an experienced consultant for the best role



New opportunities to progress your career

A letter from the Chief Social Workers

Dear Social Workers,

We are delighted to support the virtual Thank You to Social Workers event, and hope the event gives you a much-needed opportunity to pause and reflect on your learning and achievements from this challenging year. We also hope that this contributes to our collective ambition to raise the understanding, appreciation and profile of the profession.

We are now seven months into the pandemic, seven months that has seen you and your colleagues respond beyond all expectations. You have continued to advocate for individuals and delivered the best possible support and care that our communities have needed. We have no doubt that for many this will have come at a cost, and we have heard both examples of great innovation and adaptability, and stories of great sadness as you have remained at the heart of the human story.

What is most important right now is looking after ourselves and our colleagues as we approach a difficult winter and as we all continue to adapt to a new normal with new challenges. We should make sure we are acknowledging how we are feeling and sharing this with one another and across our networks.

Let's also ensure that we are appreciating and acknowledging the strengths of our whole workforce. Let's not forget that social workers don't all work in our Local Authorities or NHS trusts, they practice in charities, hospices, children's homes, homeless shelters and a multitude of other settings. We also work alongside hundreds of thousands of social care colleagues every day, and with key system partners in health, education and justice.

We are very proud to be members and representatives of a profession and sector that is epitomised by the practice, humanity and care that you all show every day.

Mark Harvey and Fran Leddra

Joint-Chief Social Worker for Adults (interim)

Isabelle Trowler

Chief Social Worker for Children and Families





Our hearts go out to the entire social care community. Thank you for everything you're doing; for your care, compassion and selflessly placing others first.

We applaud you.

sanctuarypersonnel.com



Sanctuary Personnel

Firstly, I would like to say a huge thank you to every single person who has taken the time to invite the Social Worker of the Year Awards into their world. We have enjoyed hearing from a diverse range of practitioners on how they are overcoming frontline challenges with bravery, creativity, and innovation.

It has been an incredibly difficult few months, which makes the sharing of inspiring social work practice stories even more poignant. Whilst the risk social workers hold continues to be heightened as we emerge from the pandemic, it is encouraging to hear stories of resilience and hope.

With everything that you do, we could not let this year pass without recognising your incredible achievements.

The virtual celebration continues to give the social work community a voice, when ordinarily it can be hard to be heard. It is humbling to view so many live and pre-recorded films, not just from experienced practitioners but student social workers too.

There is nothing more powerful than when a community of professionals come together, and this year's celebration highlights this. When a practitioner, manager or team is recognised for the work they do, it has a hugely positive impact. This is one of many reasons why Sanctuary has been supporting the awards as a sponsor for over 10 years now.

Social work can often feel tireless, yet the difference you make should not go unnoticed. This year's virtual event is about congratulating each other and acknowledging that not all stories are of heroism, but of overcoming challenges and breaking down barriers.

So, I would like to say "thank you" to you all – for your dedication in finding new and innovative ways of helping those at their most vulnerable.

James Rook

Chief Executive Officer, Sanctuary Personnel





BASW offers services that protect, support and develop your social work career, and supports you to shape the profession and our context.

1 Be protected

£5 million of professional indemnity insurance. *Please note: students members are only covered for professional placements.**



2 Be represented

Get advice from BASW Advice and Representation, a team of qualified social workers, for professional and regulatory help. Opt in to the Social Workers Union from £2.08 per month for full, tailored employment help and protection services.*



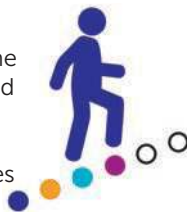
3 Be recognised

Show your commitment to professional practice and use MBASW after your name.



4 Be progressing

Develop your career. Learn about the latest social work practice developed by and for social workers. Log your CPD from a range of free or discounted training, online resources and events.



5 Be informed

Professional Social Work (PSW) magazine – the UK's only printed social work magazine – delivered free to your door ten times a year. Member-only free access to selected resources online.



6 Be ethical

BASW's Code of Ethics along with a full range of guidance and policies, upholds the highest professional standards and practice.



7 Be saving

Save up to 75% on social work journals and books as well as discount shopping deals at major retailers. Plus heavily discounted and free CPD and events. 50% discount on student membership for first post-qualifying year.*



8 Be independent

A bespoke membership for self employed social work professionals. Access Social Work Employment Services – competitively priced exclusive umbrella service for BASW members*. Be listed as a specialist in our directory.



9 Be connected

Meet like-minded colleagues, through branches, events and special interest and other groups to share ideas, discuss practice, policies and develop our profession together. Join our community of social workers online – through Twitter, Facebook and LinkedIn.



10 Be heard

The powerful voice of 21,000 members, building the strength and influence of social work and calling for urgent action on issues that really matter. Be active in campaigns. Join one of our member committees, groups and networks to shape policies.



11 Be supported

Free Professional Support Service – offering essential space and support for members to talk and think through issues, including Covid 19. Apply for financial support grants for education, hardship or international work.



A huge thank you to every social worker – your role is vital in supporting our communities

BASW is committed to supporting BASW members and the wider social work sector as much as we can throughout Covid 19



BASW

BASW England is honoured to be a Corporate Sponsor of the Social Worker of the Year Awards, which, this year, is holding a virtual 'Thank You Social Workers' event.

This is a major event in the social work calendar and more than ever it is important that we celebrate the unique contribution and diversity of the social work community.

The impact of the brutal death of George Floyd, Black Lives Matter Movement and the pandemic has been far reaching and it is important that we also take time to remember those who have lost their lives in the UK and overseas, including dearly treasured and loved colleagues, their families and friends.

These unprecedented times have affected every one of us; our families, friends, social work students, practitioners, leaders across the sector and especially the people we work with.

Social workers have worked selflessly and without question to deliver critical services, support and work 'with' citizens and partnership organisations in local communities during these incredibly challenging times – and continue to do so.

BASW would like to thank you and all our social care colleagues, families, and carers for supporting, caring, and using your skills and expertise to support others – small acts of kindness make all the difference.

The Awards are also about courage, bravery, going the extra mile and the incredible 'collective' contribution that each of you have made in these challenging times and for challenging inequality, racism, and oppression.

This year is about celebrating the 'collective' contribution of 'all' and on behalf of BASW and BASW England we would like to thank you for the incredible work that you have been doing day-in day-out since the last Award ceremony, pre and during the pandemic .

I have had the privilege of hearing directly from people with lived experience, their carers and employers about the value and contribution of the sector workforce – students, practitioners and leaders who have worked tirelessly with passion, dedication, motivation and humour (never forget the humour!) to diversify and creatively adapt the way they work in order to support the communities they serve.

Your stories of innovation, creativity and hope have shone a light on the humility, kindness and compassion of a profession that is founded on core values of social justice and human rights.

The measure of success is how individuals, families and communities judge, experience, and value what social workers do.

I am proud to be a social worker, proud of the profession, and these Awards and this event highlight the individual and collective dedication, passion, honour, and privilege of being one profession.

Maris Stratulis

National Director, BASW England

BRADFORD

enterprising, energetic, extraordinary



- City Park, an award-winning public and events space that attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors every year to events such as the Bradford Festival.
- The world's first UNESCO City of Film.
- National Science and Media Museum, the country's largest visitor attraction dedicated to the science behind the magic of media, including the exciting Wonderlab gallery.
- UNESCO World Heritage site, Saltaire village.
- Ilkley hosted the finish of a stage of the 2018 Tour de Yorkshire cycle race.



**Thank you to our wonderful social workers –
in Bradford and across the country**

www.bradford.gov.uk



City of
BRADFORD
METROPOLITAN DISTRICT COUNCIL

Bradford Metropolitan Council

Covid-19 has provided the biggest challenge to our communities and way of life in more than seventy-five years. The response of people and their families and services across the country needs to be properly acknowledged and celebrated.

Our Social Workers in Bradford have kept focus on what is important to people and ensure that, no matter how difficult the circumstances, their approach is steeped in humanity.

Social Workers in Bradford have concentrated on ensuring that, throughout the pandemic, rights-based practice has remained at the heart of all that they do. Our social workers have linked in with the wider community to keep people connected. Crucially, our social workers have also made sure we haven't missed the little things that give us hope and make a difference.

In Bradford our Older People, Hospital and Mental Health social workers responded magnificently to the crisis. They remained as close to people in acute settings as possible, offering practical support to families and helping maintain contact where possible. They work to ensure that choice, control and decision making remains with people and their families. They also provided wonderful on-going care to those recovering from the effects of the virus.

Despite their own issues in adapting to the pandemic, our social workers increased their community presence to help keep people as connected as possible. Working with small providers in Bradford, our Learning Disability Social Workers worked around the clock to deliver IT, such as hand-held tablet devices, to enable people with learning disabilities to maintain vital connections during lockdown, particularly with family and friends.

The human touch is vital. Social Workers in our Preparation for Adulthood teams worked tirelessly to ensure that young people and their families received Eid gifts and/or an Easter gift so they could celebrate culturally important events and milestones.

I wish to sincerely thank all our wonderful social workers here in Bradford and across the country. Their approach, their professionalism and dedication to public service at a time of national crisis is to be remembered, commemorated and they deserve our heartfelt thanks.

Ian MacBeath

Strategic Director of Health and Wellbeing,
Bradford Metropolitan Council





YORKSHIRE & THE HUMBER

Children matter. Children's Social Work Matters.

It's a simple statement, but one that every Children's Social Worker wholeheartedly believes. It's what unites us in our daily endeavour.



This is why the 15 local authorities across Yorkshire and the Humber have joined forces in a collaborative way. Collectively we are tackling the misconceptions of CSW, raising the image of the profession, improving social work practice and attracting more people in to a career in this challenging yet extremely rewarding role.

See how our [‘Improving Lives’](#) campaign and [COVID-19 social work diaries](#) are improving the image of social work or to check out the jobs currently available in our region visit us at www.childrensocialworkmatters.org

Children's Social Work Matters

We recognise the value and vital role that our children's social workers have in protecting and improving the lives of children and their families.

This year more than ever, we are particularly proud to sponsor this fabulous Social Worker of the Year 'Thank You Social Workers' event. Congratulations to every one of you for your contribution and achievements and to social workers across the country who all deserve recognition for the hard work they do with children and families all year round – particularly in these challenging times where you've all had to adapt and work differently to continue to support families and keep children safe. On behalf of all of us in Yorkshire and the Humber, thank you!

Across our region, we've been working hard to nurture, develop and support our children's social work workforce. We are now seeing the benefits of this investment through growing staff confidence and resilience in delivering modern day practice. In turn, staff morale and belief in their ability to make a difference in children's and families' lives has improved immeasurably.

We're also giving our social workers a voice in our 'Improving Lives' campaign and through their COVID-19 social work diaries to demonstrate the value and positive impact that their work is having on the lives of children and families in their support.

'Children's Social Work Matters' (CSWM) is our programme to attract and support Children's Social Workers and improve social work practice and delivery, with all our local authorities in Yorkshire and the Humber working together as one big children's social work team. It's also about improving the understanding, image and value of children's social work as a profession. Read more at <http://www.childrensocialworkmatters.org>.

Mel John-Ross

Executive Director Children's Services at Barnsley Metropolitan Borough Council and lead DCS for CSWM.



Essex County Council is proud to support this special 'Thank You Social Workers' event'



SERIOUS ABOUT SOCIAL WORK



Essex County Council

Welcome to the virtual Thank You Social Workers Event 2020, from all at Essex County Council (ECC). As a regular sponsor of the awards we are delighted to be a part of this amazing event. We hope that you will enjoy this virtual experience as we continue to adapt in these unprecedented times.

In Essex, we remain committed and continue to be "Serious About Social Work". We know that social work is a demanding, complex but fulfilling role, and recognise our staff are our most valued asset. We place a strong emphasis on ensuring our workforce has the best resources and cutting edge CPD opportunities to do their jobs effectively and make lasting changes to our vulnerable adults, children and families.

We also understand the importance of a work/life balance as a key factor in allowing our staff to be the best they can be by having flexible working options and other lifestyle benefits.

It is vital we regularly take time to pause, reflect, nourish ourselves and recognise the valuable role we play in today's society. So, let's join together this year, in celebrating our amazing profession and phenomenal Social Work Community -
We Believe with Us You Can!

**SERIOUS
ABOUT
SOCIAL WORK**



Essex County Council

Essex County Council

2020 is a year that many of us will remember for a long time, not only for the challenges of the global Covid pandemic but also for the spotlight on the significant inequality prevalent in the world. It has generated considerable self-reflection and re-ignited our commitment to addressing social injustice and creating a more equal and fairer society for all.



Our social work community also lost a very dear friend and colleague, Dave Hill CBE, former Director of Children's Services in Essex and Surrey and a past President of ADCS. He will be remembered for his contributions to Children's and Adults Services and leaves a lasting legacy to the profession.

Within this challenging context I am proud of how public services and the social work profession have responded to the crisis and continued to deliver outstanding services to vulnerable children, adults and families in our communities, in the most difficult of circumstances.

This year, Essex has embraced the request to recognise the invaluable contribution students and NQSWs have made and continue to make in helping to keep services running across the country. The journey of being a student social worker transitioning into a NQSW is a special time with its challenges but also rewards. It is a real privilege when I hear their stories and see their growth as they begin to develop practice confidence and change the lives of the most vulnerable.

In Essex, we are proud to welcome over 100 NQSWs and 100 students across our services every year – 2020 has been no different.

Our staff are our most valuable resource and as a Social Work profession we should take every opportunity to celebrate and be proud. Thank you.

Helen Lincoln


Executive Director for Children, Families and Education (DCS)
Essex County Council





S12 Solutions

Mental Health Act Assessments



Find Doctor

Search Results

Filters

Within 40 Miles 23/07/19 Within Next 4 Hours

Amanda Mings On Call

Available until 10:00 AM on 23/07/19

Distance from location: 3 miles away • BA1 MHT associated?: Yes

Joseph Davidson Add Doctor to Assessment

Available until 4:00 PM on 23/07/19

Distance from location: 5 miles away • BA1 MHT associated?: Yes

Matthew Linton In Assessment

Distance from location: 28 miles away • BS16 MHT associated?: No

Alan Jones Assess

DASHBOARD ASSESSMENTS FORMS SUPPORT

MHA Assessment Setup ✓

Find local and available section 12 approved doctors.

MHA Statutory Forms ✓

Complete, hold, sign and share MHA forms via your account.

Claims Processing ✓

Access to quick and easy claim form processing and payments.

Video Calling ✓

Video calling, to support AMHP and Doctor communication.

Form A2 **Mental Health Act 1983**
Regulation 4(1)(a)(ii)

Section 2 – application by an approved mental health professional for admission for assessment

To the managers of (name and address of hospital)

Name of hospital

Address

Simplified.

S12 Solutions is an app and website, which supports AMHPs and section 12 doctors to efficiently complete MHA assessment processes.



S12 Solutions

The S12 Solutions team and I are proud to sponsor Thank You Social Workers by the Social Worker of the Year Awards.

This year has challenged how social workers undertake their daily practice and support their own wellbeing. Our workforce has adapted to wearing PPE and working online from home; for many this involves balancing the responsibilities of maintaining high standards for service users, isolated from colleagues and routines, while also taking care of family.

Colleagues from various mental health teams have shared examples of how they have maintained contact and visits with service users during lockdown and beyond, all while managing the risk of bringing Covid-19 home afterwards.

I have been humbled by the importance of the social worker role and grateful for my colleagues' community spirit and teamwork. I hope you all feel very proud of your achievements in such difficult times.

The work led by Health Education England in regards to Mental Health Social Workers has highlighted the inspiring and essential work we do; good progress is being made towards ensuring career progression opportunities are available to social workers, and this role is recognised and valued.

Health and Social Care has had to embrace digital this year, and the S12 Solutions team has continued working behind the scenes to develop and deploy digital tools to help AMHPs complete the Mental Health Act assessment processes.

The future is uncertain, but we know there are difficult times ahead; the pandemic's impact on the nation's mental health is nationally recognised, and the mental health social worker role will be more important than ever before.

We would like to take this moment to recognise and thank you all for everything you do for your communities.

Amy Manning

S12 Founder and Managing Director,
AMHP





Sunderland City Council is delighted to be part of this event and wish to express our thanks to all the social workers who work tirelessly to support the workforce to ensure that the social work service is delivered to those most in need.

For more information about living and working in Sunderland visit: www.sunderland.gov.uk


**Sunderland
City Council**

Sunderland City Council

Sunderland City Council is delighted to be sponsoring the 2020 Thank You Social Workers event.



Here in Sunderland we recognise the added value and improved outcomes for people that social workers can be instrumental in achieving. It is their dedication and commitment that forms part of the DNA of every successful social work team. The necessity to work productively with customers, carers, partner agencies, and wider society has never been more evident than during the current Covid-19 pandemic and our efforts in these respects deserve to be recognised and celebrated.

Social workers provide support and nurturing, utilising safe creative spaces for experimenting and learning from one another whilst staying true to our core values. In recent times the social worker has had to learn or enhance their knowledge of assistive technology, strength based assessment, new ways of working and responding to ever increasing demands at an extraordinary pace, then proceed to instil this knowledge across not only their own organisations but also with customers themselves and key strategic partners. All of this of course requires their ability to both utilise, contribute to design and building reciprocal learning and developmental environments across our wider social care sector.

Sunderland City Council is delighted to be part of this event and wish to express our thanks to all the social workers who work tirelessly to support the workforce to ensure that the social work service is delivered to those most in need.

Fiona Brown

Executive Director of Neighbourhoods
Sunderland City Council

Devon County Council

Devon County Council is extremely proud to be a sponsor of Thank You Social Workers from the Social Worker of the Year and demonstrate our on-going commitment to supporting all those working in social care.

This year more than ever people have seen the incredible work happening every day by social workers and indeed all those working across adults and children's social care. The dedication and commitment given and the difference that social care makes to the lives of so many children, adults and families has been in the spotlight like never before, showcasing the human value of the wonderful things our superheroes have been doing in such testing circumstances.

Social care staff across the country and across our county have had to work in very different ways in very testing conditions; they have embraced new ways of working, exploring and using technology like never before, existing partnerships have grown and new ones have developed. And, whilst in the middle of a pandemic, always thinking about what is being learned and what can be embedded into work beyond the present. All these things whilst their own lives have been disrupted like never before.

Mental health and wellbeing is central to all our lives, and the importance of that has been magnified this year. We hope that Devon's contribution and support of Social Worker of the Year provides an opportunity for everyone working in social care to reflect on how much has been achieved but also talk about just how hard it has been, how hard people have worked and also remember those that we have lost.

Jennie Stephens

Chief Officer for Adult Care and Health, Devon County Council



**The importance
of wellbeing isn't
lost on us!**

**Social care in Devon.
Opportunities to
grow your career
and your life.**



Devon
County Council

devon.gov.uk/workingfordevon

Social Work England

Social Work England is proud to support this special event – an event which offers us a timely opportunity to shine a light on positive practice and share our appreciation for the fantastic job that social workers do every day.

Social workers and society are facing pressure like never before due to Covid-19. On top of navigating the personal challenges that the pandemic brings, social workers remain as ever at the forefront of supporting our most vulnerable people, alongside their health and social care colleagues.

Social Work England has a unique view of the social work profession and remains committed to influencing the conversation on the collective response required by the profession in the months that lie ahead.

Despite these challenging times we have seen many examples of social workers adapting, finding solutions and working in new ways with energy and dedication. Social work operates as part of a complex system that fundamentally has people and relationships at the heart of it. Your response to this pandemic demonstrates that clearly. Collaboration, now more than ever, will be the key for all of us to continue to put people first so that they receive the best possible support whenever they might need it in life.

Thank you all once again for the difference you truly make to society and for shining a light for all to see on the principles that underpin outstanding social work practice.

Colum Conway

Chief Executive
Social Work England



We're delighted to shine a light on the positive practice on display across the social work profession. Thank you to all social workers for your continued hard work.

We believe in the power of collaboration and share a common goal with those we regulate - to protect the public, enable positive change and ultimately improve people's lives.

We want to work with everyone with an interest in social work to raise standards, so that the public have confidence in a trusted and skilled workforce that is recognised for the contribution it makes to the wellbeing of individuals, families and communities.

Get to know your regulator at socialworkengland.org.uk



 @socialworkeng

 Social Work England

 Social Work England

UNISON

UNISON is proud to take part in this year's celebration of the amazing work social workers do.

We recognise the vital role they play in supporting and protecting individuals and communities traumatised by coronavirus. Social workers have responded with extraordinary effort and dedication to the challenges the pandemic has created. We are really pleased that they are receiving some well-deserved recognition for the work they've done.

As the UK's largest trade union for social workers and the wider social care workforce, we know the challenges they face and the differences they make to people's lives. As an organisation built on solidarity and togetherness, UNISON would like to pay tribute to the social work teams that practice effective team working on a daily basis. Great teamwork, alongside high-quality professionalism, is at the heart of excellent public service and social work.

We also applaud the social workers across the country who are taking a stand through UNISON against the huge challenges facing the profession like continued austerity, rising demand for services and growing caseloads. Their fight for better working conditions and genuine development opportunities will result in better services for the public.

UNISON hopes that all the attendees have a fantastic evening.

Jon Richards

Head of Education and Local Government
UNISON



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From
£1.30
a month

Worried about your job?
In these uncertain times there's never
been a better time to join UNISON.

For as little as £1.30 a month our members get:

- advice, support and help at work
- a helpline that is open until midnight
- legal help for you at work and your family at home
- plus a wide range of exclusive member discounts.

Annual salary	Monthly cost
Up to £2,000	£1.30
£2,001 – £5,000	£3.50
£5,001 – £8,000	£5.30
£8,001 – £11,000	£6.60
£11,001 – £14,000	£7.85
£14,001 – £17,000	£9.70
£17,001 – £20,000	£11.50
£20,001 – £25,000	£14.00
£25,001 – £30,000	£17.25
£30,001 – £35,000	£20.30
over £35,000	£22.50

UNISON – essential cover for you
UNISON is proud to sponsor the
Social Worker of the Year Awards 2020

Join online at joinunison.org or call free on **0800 171 2193**

London Borough of Waltham Forest

The London Borough of Waltham Forest is delighted to sponsor this year's awards and to have an opportunity to recognise the vital part that services have played during Covid.

We are inspired by our workforce and the great work they do to support and enable people to change their lives and live the best that they can. The Covid-19 pandemic has had an almost unimaginable impact on our communities. We have seen all our social workers, working in partnership with our wider social care workforce, answer the call to arms and go above and beyond to support our most vulnerable families despite the challenging environment. This impressive and collective response of our social workers has had a positive impact across the borough.

Our staff have worked in new ways with our community, taking a more personal approach to support. They were able to rapidly adjust and deliver different approaches including: socially distant home visits, setting up mobile response units and supporting delivery of distanced contact in different locations.

Through better utilisation of technology, such as video conferencing, our social workers have continued to keep in contact with the children and vulnerable adults they work with, maintaining the vital relationships they have to ensure that children, adults and families continue to feel connected.

We are extremely proud of the resilience and solidarity our whole team has shown; they have worked tirelessly in supporting residents during these difficult times. We are assured that no matter what challenges we face in the future, with the strength of our social workers collectively we can tackle anything.

Heather Flinders

Strategic Director of Families
London Borough of Waltham Forest



Waltham Forest

Bursting with energy and opportunity, Waltham Forest in north east London is a place people want to live, raise a family and start a business.

We are creating liveable neighbourhoods, where people have access to quality housing and the services and facilities that they need, along with vibrant town centres that have thriving shops, restaurants and entertainment.

In 2019, it was the first ever London Borough of Culture - awarded by the Mayor of London - and the recipient of the Municipal Journal's Local Authority of the Year 2019. We are building on this legacy by investing in our people and place and ensuring our borough is an inclusive place for all.

**Waltham Forest Council is proud to support the
Social Worker of the Year Awards**



If you can't go home, we'll bring home to you.

Story written by Wendy Ashton, Palliative Care Social Worker and Family Support Team Lead at Eden Valley Hospice and winner of the 'Making a Difference' Social Worker of the Year Award 2018.

As a palliative care social worker in a Hospice, Covid 19 has really challenged my ethics, morals and ways I practice – hopefully for the better in the long term.

I work in a small hospice that covers a vast rural community as a full time Palliative Care Social Worker and Family Support Team Lead.

I work with people at end of life who have complex needs and aim to make the time that people have left as happy and content as possible. A large part of my role involves working with families and friends as well as clients.

Technology for good

Often, a patient is too unwell to return home and chooses to die at the hospice. A last wish is often to see home for one last time, and we can arrange this with a carer and transport for an hour at home. It is tricky to organise, but it is worth it when you see the joy on that patient's face when they return after seeing home for the last time.

Unfortunately, this was not an achievable goal with lockdown. However, I am not one to give up so, after speaking to the patient's husband, we set up for him to video the house room by room – including the cats in it too.

The patient's husband did this and, after a bit of IT help, we downloaded 2 short videos onto a laptop that we left in the patient's room. She watched the clips with animation, showing staff her beautiful home that she was so proud of.

The cats (too feral to visit apparently – we had suggested) also made an appearance and the patient was ecstatic to see them. She watched those clips daily for a couple of weeks before she became too unwell to watch. A truly positive and happy outcome. If you can't go home, we will bring home to you.



Supporting families

On another day, a patient was dying and was Covid positive. One family member was allowed to see her – with full PPE on – but others were upset they could not say goodbye too. I set up a WhatsApp call with the family so they could all say their goodbyes to her.

Although the patient was unresponsive, hearing is the last sense to go – we truly believe she died knowing that all her loved ones said goodbye before she died.

We also had volunteers knitting hearts for the hospice; the patient kept one and her family were sent matching ones that were bagged for the quarantine period prior to sending out.

Keeping connected

As a social worker I have used Facetime and WhatsApp to connect family and friends. We've had family/MDT meetings in the gardens sat two metres apart, and we have given lots of virtual hugs and hands on shoulders to comfort. It has been difficult at times trying to make a difference at end of life, but I feel we have been successful within our restrictions and limits.

I've had heart-breaking moments when I could not initiate change. A lady in her 50s was troubled constantly in her last week of life. When I asked what was wrong and could I help, she told me that she was struggling to decide which ten people could go to her funeral. How on earth can you answer that? I could not do anything except listen – often that helps.

A good quality of life is so important, even if it is only for a day or two. I love my job and hope that we can continue to work to achieve dreams and happiness at end of life with our clients and families. I know I will keep on trying.



Power, Trust and Race

Story written by Eddie Dube, Social Worker at Somerset County Council

Throughout my career as a social worker, I have worked in situations where trust is weak or entirely absent. This could be due to negative past experiences at the hands of social services, a negative representation of social services in the media, or historic abuse of power by the powerful.

Mistrust can also be rooted in history, such as the prejudices and injustices experienced by people of colour.

History matters – it's part of the bigger picture that shapes who we are. My lecturer, Collin Rones, used to remind us to always look at that bigger picture and avoid focusing solely on our own individual perspective, which can make us see only what we want to see and reinforce what we already believe.

The bigger picture

It is that bigger picture that I want us to look at to help us understand what has been happening lately: the Covid-19 pandemic and the murder of George Floyd by police in America.

A recent report found that Black, Asian and other minority ethnics (BAME – a term I dislike for the way it stereotypes a hugely varied group of people) have been disproportionately affected by Covid-19, with death rates higher among people of black and Asian origin than any other ethnic group. A Public Health England report pointed out that “racism and discrimination suffered by Britain’s black, Asian and minority ethnic people contributed to high death rates from Covid-19 in those communities”.

According to the Guardian, the report further states “racism and discrimination experienced by BAME key workers is a root cause affecting health and exposure risk. For BAME communities, lack of trust of NHS services resulted in reluctance to seek care”. Why is there a lack of trust in NHS services by these communities, when quite a large percentage work for the NHS and mostly on the frontline? Is the report alluding to racial discrimination by the NHS, either in the form of institutional or organisational racism?

Dehumanisation during the slave trade

What is racism, anyway? For black people, it traces back to the slave trade, which justified its cruelties with a mixture of pseudo-science and negative stereotypes. The dehumanisation suffered by black people during the slave trade is part of our shared history and has unavoidably shaped our modern world.

It might not be noticeable to some, but it's there, passed down through generations like a family heirloom, or like a statue on a street which we don't really notice because it's always been there. It feels normal to us that it's there.

But something being normal does not make it healthy, or right, nor does it mean we have to accept it. One of the most striking features of our shared history of racial discrimination was how normal it was – almost everyone thought this way, and black people were expected to accept it. These social norms have always been shaped by those who have power and want to keep it – it was the case during the slave trade, it was the case after the emancipation, and is still the case now.

Recent news reveals that the slave trade is still alive and well and is closer to home than we all care to admit. Many of us are unknowingly wearing clothes or using technology that are the end products of a supply chain which relies on exploitation and/or child labour.

Modern slavery surrounds us, and its victims live invisibly among us – serving our food, picking our crops, and working in factories. From the outside, they seem to have normal jobs, but behind closed doors they are exploited for personal gain, forced into debt, and threatened with violence. The old slave owner mentality never went away, it just went into hiding.

What made George Floyd different was that we saw him. The death of a man, captured on video in real time, in the hands of someone who should be a protector was a massive wake up call for us all. The killing of George Floyd refocused the spotlight on the power of the police – why are black people so over-represented in the justice system, prisons, stop and search, not to mention Covid deaths and unemployment?

The numbers might have something to do with the way black people have been portrayed: as animals, uncontrollable, criminally minded and dangerous

Because of this, more black people are handcuffed by the police at the very first instance. The negative portrayal of black people has fractured our society, creating an ‘us and them’ mentality which thrives on mistrust.

A new social contract

What can we do about all of this? Laws and legislation which make discrimination illegal will take us part of the way but will depend on political willingness to apply them. Dr Martin Luther King Jnr said; “The law cannot change the heart but can restrain the heartless”, so we need more than just the law – we need systems that promote social justice and humanity, and we need to start challenging ideas which keep us in bondage. As long as we are defined by our race and ethnicity, inequality and injustice will continue.

A new social contract is needed to build trust between black people, the state and its systems. State institutions need to start to build trusting relationships that eradicate systematic segregation and discrimination, and this needs to happen quickly.

The Ethical Framework for Health and Social Care is a very good tool that can be used to rebuild trust across the system. It can be used by the police force, health delivery systems, employers and even policy makers. The framework looks at the big picture, which makes it particularly relevant to the current climate, not just in light of Covid-19.

My Life with Social Workers

Story written by Kash, a member of CLICK Plus, The London Borough of Wandsworth's Children in Care Council for Care Leavers.

Hi! I'm Kash, I'm 19 years old and I'm a member of CLICK Plus. I have been a member of CLICK and CLICK Plus for around four years. In that time, I've had the opportunity to interview prospective members of Children's Services, inspect semi-independent properties and I've even gone on holiday with CLICK Plus – which I loved. I love shopping, talking and my hair!

When I was younger, around 12-years-old, I remember my first social worker taking me and my sister out for food. That was really nice and it was so good to get out of the house. I remember eating chicken and being happy – I like my freedom and to be out.

This social worker also took me and my sister to Primark, to go shopping. This was really fun – I remember I bought fake nails and put them on when we were together. I can't really remember what we talked about at the time, but I remember that this social worker made me feel safe. We got on so well and I really liked her even though my parents didn't – I never knew why.

I liked having my own space with my social worker – time away from my family. I had this social worker for around four or five years; she was bubbly, loud and patient. I wouldn't have changed anything about her, I really liked her.

Since then I've had a few social workers and I've had ups and downs. Another social worker I had when I was around 16 or 17 helped me out with my anger. She supported me to start kick boxing which I absolutely loved. This really helped as it calmed me down a lot and gave me a routine. Boxing is something that I still want to do and I have just started getting back into it again with CLICK Plus.

Social workers have been a big part of my life – they have gone out of the way to help and support me. They have asked me what I want for the future, encouraged me and helped me stay on the right path. I can think of three social workers in particular who stood out. These social workers accepted me for who I am and for that I'm really grateful.

What makes a brilliant social worker:

- ◆ Being patient, caring, open and non-judgemental
- ◆ Understanding the whole context – the young person's family, history, culture, religion, sexuality and additional needs
- ◆ Encouraging young people to stick with education and asking what is going on for them with school
- ◆ Getting to know the young person for who they are e.g. their favourite food, music, TV, hobbies, interests and fashion sense/style
- ◆ Understanding that everyone makes mistakes, **but** being firm when mistakes are repeated and enforcing good boundaries.



Kash
with Amelia,
Participation and
Independent Visitors
Manager at the
London Borough of
Wandsworth

'If you can cope with this and still want to do it, you are made for social work'

Story written by Mary Carter, Student Social Worker of the Year Award winner 2019 and Newly Qualified Social Worker at Essex County Council.

Back in November 2019, which I'm sure feels a lifetime ago for us all, I was thrilled to win the prestigious award of Student Social Worker of the Year. I remember this day like it was yesterday and it's high up there on best days ever. For me, it reignited my lifelong desire to become a social worker.

Great expectations

I was earnestly grateful for the recognition I received for my work as I know that every other nominee, in fact thousands of students around the country, was as capable of winning this award. I was overwhelmed – a combination of shock, excitement and pure happiness. Hearing the remarkable efforts that practitioners were making to their profession reminded me that social work was my calling, a truly honourable evening to be part of. This being said, it did not come without its worries.

I went into the new year with all that was ahead and this knocked me, the 'emotional hangover' began to unveil. Winning this award left me feeling that the pressure was on and the expectations to do well were uncomfortably high. What if I struggle? What if I get 'found out,' a feeling we all struggle with from time to time.

Four months on from this evening and a time of our lives that none of us would have expected – Covid-19, a crisis that has highlighted the importance and value of this field. A time when a new generation of social workers was very much needed.

From student to social worker

Although I was fortunate to have only ten placement days left, my final statutory social work placement was significantly impacted by Covid-19. I was instructed to self-isolate and work remotely. Some students did not want to be in placement when I was adamantly sure I wanted to be. I was supported and a solution was made that was creative and flexible. I feared the leap from student to practitioner, I feared the unknown.

After a successful interview and rest from placement, I started my dream job in the Children in Care team at Essex County Council. I was nervous and feared what was ahead in my new role, whilst equally desperate to use my newly developed skills, passion and optimism to make a difference.

For all students and newly qualified social workers, learning had to change quite significantly. I had to learn my role, tasks and what was expected of me very quickly. I needed to know how to respond to this crisis professionally and appropriately.



New beginnings

It felt outlandish starting a role where I didn't have a full team around me for help and support. This being said, I was warmly welcomed and, by connecting on our teams WhatsApp and remotely via Microsoft Teams, I began to feel comfortable asking questions, seeking guidance and opportunity. I formed part of a team that wanted me to grow and a team that saw potential.

Winning the Student Social Worker of the Year award gave me the confidence to get involved with and become a founding member of Social Work Connect: a webinar-based initiative helping students, practice educators and practitioners from across the world to stay connected and develop knowledge around social work theory and reflection.

I have also been volunteering in my community in support of ending homelessness. My plans to set up a student exchange to Ukraine for care experienced students is under way. The Covid-19 pandemic has showed us how much we can achieve when we all work together.

You are made for social work

Whilst the beginning of my journey as a newly qualified social worker has been a different experience from the one I had envisaged it has, in many ways, prepared me for my lifelong career in the profession.

I feel incredibly proud to be a social worker and honoured to have been able to contribute to supporting people through the Covid-19 crisis where my professional identity is becoming more apparent.

Social work is a gift that allows us to walk into the lives of wonderful people and children from all different walks of life and make positive, purposeful and meaningful changes. I remain focused and determined to develop my skills and use my experience to build a positive social work career. As a committed Pinterest user I love a quote – the above words from professor Brené Brown comes to mind.

I share this award and journey with all the social work students who, despite the circumstances and the existing struggles, commit to making change every day. If you can cope with this level of uncertainty, manage your everyday lives and still want to do it then you are absolutely made for social work.

“

Connection
is the energy that is
created between people
when they feel seen, heard
and valued – when they
can give and receive
without judgment

Brené Brown,
PHD, LMSW

The Importance of Supervision

Story written by Rachael Jennings, on behalf of Social Work England.

Rachel is a Principal Social Worker and Social Work Strategy and Development Manager for Integrated Adults Service at Wakefield Council.

As social workers we work with individuals and professionals who don't always have a full understanding of what social work is and what it isn't. Naturally, there will be differing perspectives and people will disagree with your professional judgement.

Whilst it's crucial we're authentic in our interactions, we still must be aware of the impact that our language and behaviour has, and also remain non-judgemental. I'm human, so I don't always get it right. Because I'm naturally reflective and a bit of an over thinker, this can be stressful and anxiety-provoking for me.

Maintaining reflective practice

Supervision is an opportunity to have protected time with your manager to talk through the impact the work has on you personally, as well as exploring decision making and ensuring this is values-based and person-centred.

It is essential for social workers' wellbeing and professional development, and most importantly, helps us to achieve the best outcomes for the people we work for.

We can take time to consider what we're doing, why and whether that's working for the person we are working with from their perspective, and if not, consider whether there might be another way forward.

Covid-19 has forced us to reconsider our ways of working, from different working patterns, homeworking and how we maintain and develop positive relationships with our teams and the people we support. This isn't easy and can feel isolating if there aren't good support mechanisms in place.

Supervision should be a safe place to talk about how the current situation is affecting people on a personal level, but also how relationships in teams and with individuals may be changing. Supervision is crucial to letting off steam and talking through challenges to help find solutions.

The Ethical Framework

The pandemic has brought new legislation, policy and guidance across health and social care. To support this, the Chief Social Workers have introduced the Ethical Framework for Adult Social Care to help guide social workers, so we all operate within the values and ethics of the profession.

Supervision is an opportunity to critically reflect on how your organisation is responding to the challenges and how this in turn affects practice and the impact on the people and communities we support. Supervision is also a way of discovering what's going well and why and celebrating this with others to develop good practice and better results for the people we work with.

Preparation for supervision is important. I find that it's good to set aside a little time to consider what I want to talk about. This may be a situation or person you support, organisational updates or even a piece of research or literature you've read that's resonated.

Consider peer support

Supervision can take many forms and social workers could also establish peer supervision and support. There may be an experienced social worker in your team or organisation who may be able to facilitate this. You could also contact your Principal Social Worker if you want to discuss the supervision arrangements within your organisation.

Social workers should ensure that they receive appropriate supervision and if they do not, respectfully request it from their supervisor or line manager.

If supervision isn't happening, I'd recommend considering asking why not. Supervision shouldn't be the first thing to be discarded when things get busy or stressful. When we're going through a time of enormous change and under additional pressures as we are now, supervision is even more important to ensure that your professional needs are met, and that practice is critically reflective and values based.



Going the extra mile (or 100) during coronavirus

Stories shared by The Social Care Reablement Team at Devon County Council.

Alice's story: I was the first to visit a client on her discharge from hospital at the beginning of lockdown. She was feeling scared at the prospect of not being able to see her family and was worried about being isolated. Her fridge was full of rotting food. I cleared it all out for her, went and bought her a few items and arranged a food delivery service.

Sensing she was going to struggle I chatted about what she liked to watch on TV. She mentioned a programme she had enjoyed but hadn't seen it all, remembering it was called 'The Crown'. I did some research and realised it was on Netflix. With her consent I organised for her to have Netflix installed and when I visited her again, I found her thrilled to have discovered there were four seasons of it and she was happily binge watching it! She made great progress with us.

Sami's story: A client I was visiting was finding isolation very hard and was feeling scared with all the news on TV about COVID-19. She needed the security of her family and they arranged for her to move up country to stay with them.

She was worried about stopping at the motorway services and being at risk of picking up the virus and thought it best to take some snacks and drinks for the journey. She didn't have much in the house to pack up and so, on moving day, I bought her some snacks and a reusable water bottle with a straw as her leaving gift from me. It was warmly received and hopefully made her a little less anxious about the journey.



Julie's story: I was visiting a gentleman who was struggling with his health. He was 99-years-old and coming up to his 100th birthday at the end of June. I wanted to make his birthday special as I knew I would be visiting him that morning.

His daughter had spoken to one of our team leaders and expressed that her dad had become very low in mood and feels like he's giving up. But she had arranged a small surprise celebration at his home for his 100th birthday, which she hoped would boost him up again.

It certainly did! He received over 100 cards, including the one from me, and the balloons I bought him brought a huge smile to his face. He was visited by some friends and family – from a distance – and he even had a film crew there and made it onto the local TV news!

Lisa Lynn's story: I was visiting a client, who lived alone, to review and update his medication paperwork. He had just had a visit from his GP that morning who had informed him he was being referred to the palliative care nursing team and the client had expressed his wish to remain at home.

We were chatting and I spent quite some time with him, partly searching his kitchen cupboards for his favourite biscuits (I failed when I produced a tin of crackers), I listened to his stories of his past and he showed me a tapestry his wife had made before she passed and how he was going to hand it down to his granddaughter.

At this point the door flew open and in 'bounced' our support worker Lucy to make his lunch. I explained the doctor had just visited and the news he had been given. Lucy has a huge personality and it was clear the client was thrilled to see her.

She spent time chatting with him and managed to put a positive spin on the whole situation. Lucy bounced (again) into the kitchen to prepare his lunch and it was at this point the client pointed out a large digital clock that Lucy had given to him a few weeks earlier as he could no longer read the time on his watch.

He winked at me, smiled a huge smile and said: "This girl has brought sparkle back to my life".





Eddy Broadhurst's story (Occupational Therapist in Social Care Reablement):

During these unusual times, our ways of working have needed to be reconsidered and adjusted, especially joint working; in order to ensure guidelines are adhered to amidst working in a pandemic. I feel technology – particularly video chat platforms – has allowed me to do this.

The client returned home from hospital and now needs to use a wheelchair at all times and was not able to access essential facilities around their home.

With the virtual presence of occupational therapy via video chat and the physical support of a Reablement Team Leader we were able to do a joint OT assessment. We obtained the client's strengths and needs, observed the client around their home and gathered essential measurements of the home and their wheelchair in order to inform the next steps.

I established the client would benefit from major home adaptations of doorway widening and ramped access to ensure safe and independent access to essential facilities and the community. I was able to complete the necessary paperwork and sent it to the client via email. They were able to apply an electronic signature which I then sent to the relevant council to be processed as an urgent recommendation.

Graham's story (SCR Team Leader): On a very busy 10 hour duty I received a call from a support worker, who was visiting a client, to say she could hear a cat meowing but couldn't find it; the client had not seen her cat since returning home from hospital!

I prompted the support worker to follow the sound. "It's somewhere in the kitchen," she said. Realising the cat had climbed on top of a kitchen cupboard and somehow fallen and got stuck behind it, I decided to call the RSPCA. To my disappointment, during lockdown, they were unable to visit.

I decided, despite being allergic to cats, I would go to rescue the cat. To try and keep my allergy under control, I equipped myself with full PPE, including goggles and a very padded winter coat and drove to the client's house. I was greeted with a rather aggressive, upside down, crazy-eyed cat that really did not seem to want to be rescued. I climbed the kitchen units and, despite being clawed several times, successfully rescued the cat and took it to a local vet. Owner and cat are doing well.



A day in the life of an Approved Mental Health Professional

Story written by Sam McClean, an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)

Today's shift starts at 10am. After my morning meetings and admin, at 11.30am, I am referred to a 72-year-old man who lives at home and has severe dementia – we'll call him Jim.

Jim no longer cooks, but he is well nourished, having his meals and drinks at local pubs and restaurants. Due to coronavirus these places are now all closed, and Jim doesn't understand why.

Confusion and frustration

Jim's social worker has arranged for carers to come and help him, but he is suspicious of them – he doesn't know why they call, and he can be hostile to them. They bring him warm meals, but he is suspicious, so he puts them to one side and then forgets about them.

He still goes out from his home, but experiences social distancing restrictions which he doesn't understand. When he goes to the shops, he is asked to queue and keep a distance of two metres from other people. Jim doesn't understand why, so ignores this. People get angry with him and the police are called. Eventually he is fined – in total three times – for not following the rules.

Jim goes to the local pub where he usually has his meals – it's boarded up due to coronavirus, so he tries to break-in because he is hungry, thirsty and has the money to pay. He relies on public transport but can't understand why his buses come so infrequently, or why he must sit so far away from everyone else – he gets angry when he is told off by the driver, who he then hits.

Jim has been reviewed by his psychiatrist, who recommends for him to be detained under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act. This means that doctors believe he experiences a mental disorder of a nature or degree (in this case dementia) which requires a compulsory assessment in hospital in the interests of his own health, safety, and the protection of others.

Jim will need to be assessed by a second doctor and me and I'll drive 50 miles to the town where he lives to do this. I am not alone – I work as part of a team, and while I am driving my colleague phones the ward to ask if there a bed is available. Also, a second doctor needs to be found and asked to attend. These issues are processed like a tape recorder playing in my head as I am driving.

The assessment

When I arrive at Jim's town, I find out there is a bed at the ward and it has already been nominated for him. I request a second doctor who thankfully agrees to come, and we arrange to see Jim at his home at 5.15pm.

I am grateful for this. Although it sounds simple, it can take hours to persuade a doctor to attend. I go through Jim's notes, speak to his nearest relative and then his social worker. She is very helpful, and clearly knows his case well. As I am doing these things, I am planning ahead – using my knowledge and experience, getting all the 'ducks in a row' as some of my colleagues say.

I feel there is a strong possibility that Jim will be placed under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act due to his poor engagement with care, his deteriorating memory, his poor intake of food and fluid, the episodes of violence and aggression, and his poor awareness of his needs. I am contemplating how this will happen, the logistics of assessing him with the doctor and trying to support and distract Jim who is now suspicious and distressed, and has every right to be.

I feel there is a strong possibility that Jim will be placed under Section 2 of the Mental Health Act due to his poor engagement with care, his deteriorating memory, his poor intake of food and fluid, the episodes of violence and aggression, and his poor awareness of his needs. I am contemplating how this will happen, the logistics of assessing him with the doctor and trying to support and distract Jim who is now suspicious and distressed, and has every right to be.

I know Jim has to be told the outcome of the assessment but am concerned that he may become angry and distressed, ask us to leave, or even try to assault us. His short-term memory is very poor – throughout my work he asks me the same questions repeatedly with no recall of my answers. So, I make the difficult decision of postponing this news until the ambulance arrives.

I ask Jim's social worker to join us at his home – she has established a working relationship with him and will be able to support both him and me. I'll need her to keep Jim calm while we wait for the ambulance to arrive, which can take several hours.

This is a stressful situation for all involved and I need to acknowledge that while doing the best I can. Jim's social worker, the second doctor and I all have to wear PPE whilst trying to establish a working relationship with him. We'll need to interview him in a 'suitable manner' to promote communication with him – we must enable Jim to freely express his views, but this is tricky when all our voices are garbled behind masks. It also doesn't help that we all look like characters from a science fiction film.

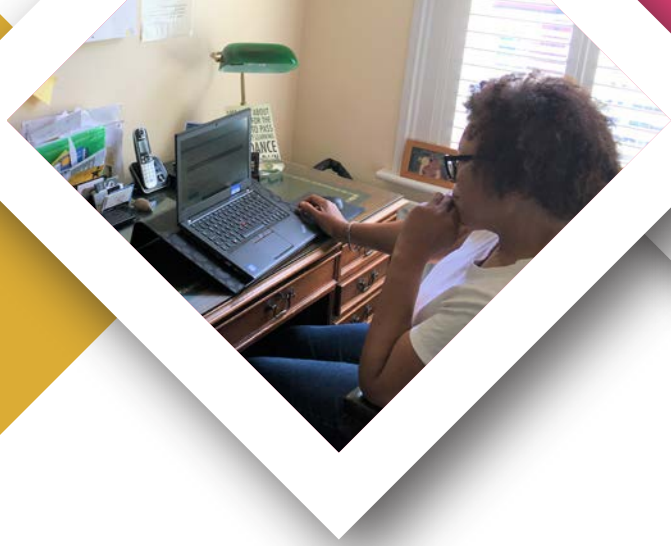
The ambulance arrives

I decide to tell Jim the outcome of the assessment when the ambulance arrives, 90 minutes after my telephone call. We guide him to pack a case for the ward, inform him of Section 2 and what it means for him and his rights, and guide him to secure his home. The crew ask if Jim has coronavirus – he has not coughed or complained of feeling hot, but all I can say for certain is that I do not know.

I feel that the sight of the ambulance crew is reassuring to Jim - he sees their uniforms and recognises their role and cooperates with them – it is as if he knows he needs to go to a hospital. I am grateful when the ambulance crew let me place my worn PPE in their refuse sack.

Jim goes with the ambulance crew, so I head to the ward for service users with dementia – the only one in Somerset. I put on new PPE to brief the staff on what has happened, complete my AMHP report detailing Jim's circumstances, and wait as the nurse in charge finishes a scrutiny of the written section papers to ensure they are completed correctly in line with the legal guideline. It is now 7pm, my shift is nearly over, and I start to drive home.

This is the time when I start to process the events of the day, and I realise that the adrenaline will course through me. Overnight I will try to decompress and I cannot help but feel that at some point, regardless of coronavirus, Jim may have needed to come into a care facility or even a psychiatric hospital. I reflect on the events of the day and come to the conclusion that I approached this work with an open mind and did my best for Jim, ensuring all interventions occurred with respect for him and his dignity.



Lockdown diaries: Will social distancing be our new norm?

Story written by Mary Scarlett, Safeguarding (Schools) Lead Training and Development Officer at Wandsworth Children's Social Care Academy

When I left the office on 10th March, I had no idea of the roller-coaster of thoughts and emotions I was sleepwalking into, and that I would finally hit a "brick wall" at about the fourth week.

At the beginning, I thought it was a bit of a novelty, even though working from home and using virtual platforms has always been a significant feature of my social work life.

Initially, I welcomed the team daily Keeping in Touch (KIT) meetings using the MS Teams platform. I willingly attended every day even though I work three days a week. That soon wore off, appearing to me as no longer being a choice but a necessity.

In what seemed to be a wave of anxiety, I began to think that if I did not attend and take responsibility for my understanding and learning, I would always be behind the curve playing catch up.

It was like a runaway train, every man for himself justifying the adaptability of their roles in these unprecedented circumstances.

What also became apparent to me, was the different group dynamics that played out in the team virtual meetings; this had me thinking about the four group stages: forming, storming, norming and performing.

Whilst I acknowledged we were an established group; in reality we were a group trying to operate and communicate in very different situational circumstances which seemed to be working for some and not for others.

These were unprecedented times

It appeared to be “business as usual” but in my mind it couldn’t be – these were unprecedented times, things were moving and changing very fast, both in our personal and working lives.

Technology had become our new BFF as well as an appendage which you wanted to cut off when it did not work, only adding to the anxiety and stress.

The level of information that was being shared and meetings being convened felt like white noise; it was not relevant to my role and it felt impossible to retain it all.

I soon mentally and emotionally withdrew from the process, choosing to be visible or invisible during the team meetings depending on how I was feeling that morning, and it seemed to me no-one noticed.

What I have taken away from this lockdown period is, as agents of change, how much do we really hear, are we even listening, and how much do we really see, or notice, when we’re looking at each other on a screen?

For some it may be the new way forward for practice but, for me, there is the danger, is it taking us down a path of permanent social distancing?

The Care Workers Charity

There are almost **2 million care workers** in the UK, and the workforce looks after some of the most vulnerable members of our society. The role is both rewarding and challenging; requiring compassion, patience and resilience. Care work is the backbone of our society-those who work in social care protect and nurture an ageing population, that continues to grow year on year.

In spite of their incredible work; care and support workers often battle a complex array of challenges including, but not limited to;

- ◆ In work poverty: a shocking 43% of care workers are **paid below the Real Living Wage** compared to 23% of the general population
- ◆ Mental ill health: 79% expressed feelings of being '**close to burnout**' – and this was even prior to the devastating onset of Covid-19
- ◆ Outside of work caring responsibilities such as childcare, and that of looking after elderly relatives-unpaid. This adds to the **stress and responsibilities** many care workers face in their daily lives.

The Care Workers' Charity was founded in 2009 with the objective of preventing care workers from falling into financial hardship. For over a decade, the charity has supported individuals working in social care with crisis grants. In providing these grants **we know we change lives**, providing a safety net for care workers who have nowhere else to turn.

We currently offer the following grants streams:

- ◆ **Crisis Care Grants:** helping care workers who have no financial cushion to overcome experiences of crisis, and to prevent the spiral into financial hardship.
- ◆ **Mental Health Grants & Support:** a forthcoming programme that will facilitate the delivery of bespoke mental health support to care workers who can't access or afford it – paid for by the CWC.

Between March 28 and August 31, the CWC distributed nearly £1.5m to care sector workers in need. There has never been a **greater need** for the support offered by The Care Workers' Charity, and demand has **increased by 1,000%**.

We **need your help** to enable us to keep providing this vital lifeline to our **social care heroes** who urgently need and **deserve** our support.

Please visit our website for more information: <https://www.thecareworkerscharity.org.uk>



Social work-led solutions to address post-Covid surge in demand



Are you experiencing a surge in referrals, CP and CLA numbers?

How confident are you that you haven't lost ground with your practice quality?

Are you seeking sustainable cost savings or want to prevent future spend?

Innovate CYPS understands that emerging from Covid will be challenging.

As a social work-led organisation, we can provide tailored solutions to many of the pressures you're experiencing and anticipating.



Northamptonshire
County Council

"Coming in at a time of crisis is never easy but Innovate CYPS understood the complexities of our situation. If it hadn't been for their support in helping us to manage the throughput of cases, we simply wouldn't have coped."

Greta Ullfors, Strategic Manager DAAT, Northamptonshire County Council

Contact us

To find out more about our social work-led solutions, please contact us on:



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