

The Contributor Newsletter

Department of Social Work and Social Care

UNIVERSITY OF
BIRMINGHAM

AUTUMN 2017

Review Day – Wednesday 13th December 2017

The review day is one of our bi-annual opportunities for feedback, getting together and supporting each other.

Location: Room 112 Muirhead Tower

Time: 10am – 1pm (with a lunch break at 12:30pm).

Please note that while we cannot pay for attending the event, we will pay travelling expenses and provide a nice lunch for all attendees! We hope to see as many of you as possible there!



Photo from our last Review Day in March 2017

Celebrating Carers Week at the Winterbourne Garden

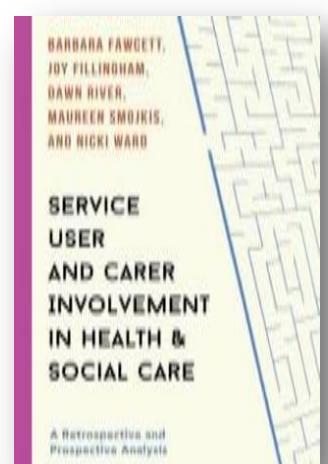


As part of Carers Week, we organised an event on the 16th of June to celebrate the inestimable work and contribution of Carers to the University of Birmingham, and to society more generally. A dozen Service User and Carer contributors joined us for an afternoon of joy, under the blessings of sunrays! We had delicious tea, coffee and cake, and delighted ourselves with the picturesque sight and tranquillity offered by the Winterbourne House and Garden.

Graham Price, one of the service users and carers who attended the event shared his experience of attending the event: 'A great idea to have a social event for contributors to meet one another in national Carers Week, in the relaxed, wonderful space Winterbourne provides. With the sun shining throughout it was a happy few hours spent meeting fellow contributors, to learn from and share with one another over a range of interests and experiences. I'm so pleased I didn't miss it'.

Another participant, Randel Barrett, reflected on the location of the event: 'The location was ideal to celebrate this Carers event in the sense that we were celebrating this event in a

peaceful/quiet environment surrounded by beautiful gardens with a collection of plants from diverse countries. This was quite conspicuous as we along with academic staff/ student observed the garden and other areas of interest on the day. Overall, it was a good occasion for all of us to get together to reminisce, share our experiences and take photos of ourselves in this relaxed environment'.



New book published in October 2017!

'Service User and Carer Involvement in Health and Social Care: A Retrospective and Prospective Analysis' is a book released in October 2017 with chapter contributions by our very own Barbara Fawcett, Joy Fillingham, Dawn River, Maureen Smoikis and Nicki Ward! Covering topics such as the importance of terminology, wellbeing and resilience and the notion of tokenism, and enhanced by a wealth of first-hand experiences and creative work by a range of service users and carers, the text examines how different forms of collaboration, participation and involvement (or lack of it) have contributed, and continue to contribute, to service development and the expansion of participant movements.

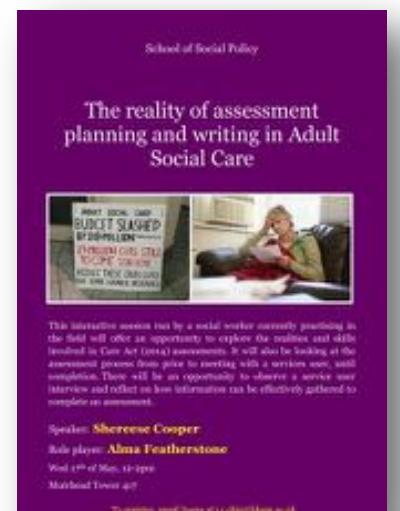
Speaker events with Shereese Cooper, Alma Featherstone and Dan Cosgrave



In the Spring of 2017, Shereese, Alma and Dan delivered two amazing speaker events for Social Work students, as well as any other students interested in the themes of the talks.

The first talk by Shereese Cooper, was called 'The Reality of Assessment Planning and Writing in Adult Social Care'. This was an interactive session run by a social worker practising in the field. Alma Featherstone did role play as a service user, to demonstrate to students the way in which the assessment can be carefully completed.

The second talk by Dan Cosgrave, was called 'Autism Awareness: Drawing on Personal Experiences of Autism and Working with Children and Young People with Autism'. In this session Dan provided a first-hand account of the life and experiences of someone with Autistic Spectrum Disorder. He drew not only on his personal and experience and his expertise of working with children and young people with autism.



Pat Thomas and Christine Ransome-Wallis attended the BASW Conference

It was a bad start when Pat Thomas and Christine Ransome-Wallis arrived at the Annual Conference of the British Association of Social Workers in Leicester.

'We had gone to tell them how to engage with older people but were greeted with "Ah you're the older people" by a senior social worker. Not the welcome we expected but others leapt to our defence and he did apologise several times. Our presence followed a group of mature contributors here meeting with Denise to discuss the Capability Framework being put together by BASW and we joined an academic from Devon who was leading on it to present two workshops at the conference.'



Pat talked about being an older person and a carer stressing that expectations on her to carry on caring ignored her own health as she got older and Christine talked about growing numbers of older people with increasing needs in a time of cutbacks and austerity. There was lively debate in both workshops and at the end of both we were applauded. Gerry, the academic, said she never got applause so we must have been good! People were still engaging with us on the station platform when we were homeward bound'. *Written by Pat Thomas*

Interview with one of our Service User and Carer Contributors, Janet Qureshi



Janet, please tell us about yourself.

In my spare time I like to travel as much as possible. It is mostly local – but I always learn something new wherever I go. My interests include writing, reading, TV documentaries, and family events. Witty clever jokes make me laugh – also watching and listening to young children who are always entertaining and inspirational! Bad time-keeping unnecessarily makes me angry – and injustice which are so prevalent in the world.

How long have you been involved with the Social Work programmes at the university?

I have been involved with the Social Work programmes at the university since 2006. I wanted to get involved to help my mental and physical wellbeing, and to savour university life!

Which areas of the BA and MA Social Work programmes have you been involved in?

Regarding areas of the BA and MA Social Work programmes, I have been involved as a Role Player – Readiness for Practice Assessments; a panel member for Readiness for Practice Assessments; Admissions Panels; small and large group teaching on the undergraduate, postgraduate and post-qualifying programmes. Perhaps my favourite is the Recovery through the Arts workshops!

What do you enjoy the most about working with students at the university?

I enjoy working with the students at the University of Birmingham because each one comes with their own unique personality and talents – all aiming to be first class social workers.

What qualities do you look for in social work applicants at interview? What makes a good social work student?

At interview I look for the social work applicants to have passion, empathy, a degree of understanding of the social work role, and commitment. A good social work student has an open mind, a willingness to listen actively, and a positive attitude which is non-judgemental.

What would be your message to Social Workers of the future?

To social workers of the future – my message would be always do your best. Sometimes go the extra mile and practice all the qualities mentioned in question 5 (as above). Always prioritise – prioritise – prioritise!

NEWS ON WAGES

The University operates a system of agreed hourly rates for small group teaching, lecturing, etc. Some of these rates are referred to as standard hours, and some as contact hours. Where a contact hour is stated, the rate of pay is either 2 times (for small group teaching) or 2.5 times (for visiting lecturers) the standard hourly rate to reflect the type of the work. This may sound confusing, but what it means in practice is that for each hour of teaching, you are paid an additional 1 hour or 1.5 hour for preparation and/or follow-up work (e.g. marking).

The new hourly rates for this academic year are the following: Visiting lecturer: £58.84; Small group teacher: £32.11; Meetings: £24.09. Importantly, please note that we will not be using the physical self-employment forms anymore. This means that you will always be paid per hour (instead of per student) for Admissions and Readiness for Practice work. If you have any queries regarding your payments, please initially contact Ioana Chis at i.c.chis@bham.ac.uk or 0121 414 6892 who will liaise with our Resources Administrator, Isobel Kordan at i.kordan@bham.ac.uk or 0121 4145714.



Teaching Partnership scheme: your representatives

The pilot Teaching Partnership to improve social work teaching/training between nine local authorities in the West Midlands is underway. Two service users/carers join directors and assistant directors of Social Services covering adults & children on the Executive Board - the very highest level. So far there have been two meetings but there seems to be confusion as to our role. We ask pertinent, relevant and "good" questions but although we are definitely equal partners and not tokenistic, I think we are trying too hard to be good participants. Apart from the two Executive meetings, we have all been included in two all-day workshops to discuss the eight workstreams - none of which we are involved in - but which were interesting background to add to our knowledge of this project. There are five of us - Pat Caplen, Reshma Patel, Mark Lynes, Taitu Forrester and me (Christine). Two of us attend the meetings and we take turns, depending on what is on the agenda and who is best qualified to contribute. Well, that was the theory but getting agendas in advance has not proved easy so we have just rotated who goes. Do not get me started on the computer generated diary notifications.. *Written by Christine Ransome-Wallis*

Best wishes to Christine Ransome-Wallis!

Unfortunately our stalwart Christine Ransome-Wallis has broken her ankle. We wish her much love and a speedy recovery and hope to see her back soon!

