



# Cúram

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SOCIAL CARE IRELAND



*Helping to make the 2018 SCI Disability SIG Conference a success  
(Left - Right): Carmel O'Toole, Christine Barretto, Antonia Kenny,  
Grace O'Flynn, Amy McGrath, Aishling Lambe, Antoinette Behan and Deborah Gill.*

*Our lives begin to end the day we become silent about things that matter.  
- Martin Luther King*



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## **EDITORIAL**

Varied and eclectic are the best words to describe what you will find in this edition of CURAM.

We begin on a sad note with the obituary of Miceal Burke whose untimely death occurred on August 1<sup>st</sup> this year.

Incredulity is probably too weak a word to describe the almost unbelievable picture by **Tim Black** of the collapse of a number of specific criminal investigations into alleged sexual abuse in the UK. In one, the main character who made the most disturbing allegations is to go on trial and an 18 month investigation by 31 detectives came up with no evidence emerging to support any of the claims made about some senior and influential politicians operating a paedophile ring. The “*Could It Happen Here?*” caption used may seem exaggerated but the article exposes “*the wilful credulity of our elites*” and if it can happen in the UK to the extent outlined, the question, in the context of Ireland, is well worth asking.

The Court of Appeal’s vindication of **Tusla staff** is to be welcomed while Minister Zappone’s Dail answer on why the **Oberstown Review Report** is not being published leaves more questions than answers. When the review was commissioned in 2016 following disturbances at the centre, Professor Ursula Kilkelly, Chair of the Oberstown Board, said the review was “*not just to set the future course for Oberstown but to significantly change youth justice in Ireland for ever*”. In that context then, it is hard to see how anything can be changed if the review remains unpublished.

Another Oberstown snippet, by journalist **Brenda Power** of The Sunday Times, gives some idea of the constraints staff there are under in using the most moderate, mild sanctions to give the children who go there a modicum of care in the real sense of that word. Staff in Oberstown, as in all residential centres are either in loco parentis or not.

Social care worker, **Dr Lucy Weir** brings a challenging depth to what the Bigger Picture for Social Care Workers is. No doubt, they often ask themselves “*what’s it all about?*” That questioning sense permeates the article with an emphasis on the absolute necessity of working on ourselves and our relationships, human and beyond and how compassion and cooperation are proven winners.

Coverage of the **Social Care Ireland Disability Special Interest Group (SIG)** conference last month on Advocacy & Decision is well deserved. This conference was over subscribed and a great success. The quoted feedback as well as the outline of an exciting new service (**YAP Ireland**) shows the positive aspects that flowed from the day.

**Carina Jeisy’s** review of Rachel Kushner’s explosive new novel gives a taste of what this powerful story tells about America and its treatment of exploited, marginalised women and their valiant efforts to fight a system that is intent on further dehumanising them. Carina also offers her view on “*Six Portraits*” with the link to this interesting, uplifting project included.

You will also find an outline of the **membership benefits** and details on how to become a member of Social Care Ireland. You can help your professional body by passing on this information to colleagues and encouraging them to join. Posting the details on your staff notice board would also help. Remember, if each member got just one other person to join the association, then our membership would be doubled. Also see benefits of **DAS Insurance** for full members of SCI as this is an important aspect of full membership.

Finally, you will find some quotes from **Martin Luther King** here and there as you read. Dr King was shot 50 years ago and his nonviolent campaign for civil rights changed America, though much remains to be done. He is one of the 20<sup>th</sup> century’s iconic figures.

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[www.socialcareireland.ie](http://www.socialcareireland.ie)

email: [info@socialcareireland.ie](mailto:info@socialcareireland.ie)

Phone: 087 746 3926

## **OBITUARY**

It is with deep regret that we learned of the death on August 1<sup>st</sup> this year of Miceal Burke who was a member of the IASCW (*now the Workers Advisory Group within Social Care Ireland*). Miceal, quietly and effectively contributed towards the establishment of Social Care Ireland as it moved toward becoming a CLG (*Company Limited by Guarantee*). The process was complicated and Miceal, as secretary in the interim period, made sure that what followed from meeting to meeting was recorded and followed through.



Miceal qualified in social care from Blanchardstown IT and his association with what was to become Social Care Ireland began when, as a student in ITB, he took on the role of student rep and then progressed to the IASCW executive.

To his family and his many friends in the voluntary sector, where he made a huge contribution, we offer our condolences. Social Care Ireland, in memory of Miceal, has made a contribution to Purple House Cancer Support, Bray, Co. Wicklow.

History will have to record that the greatest tragedy of this period of social transition was not the strident clamour of the bad people but the appalling silence of the good people. MLK

## **COULD THIS HAPPEN HERE?**

*Earlier this year in the UK, an alleged child abuse victim, known only as Nick was charged with perverting the course of justice. Nick had told detectives he had been raped and abused in the 1970s and 1980s by a number of powerful men, including the former Prime Minister Sir Edward Heath; the former head of the Army, Lord Bramall; the former Home Secretary, Lord Brittan; former Tory MP, Harvey Proctor and the former Labour MP, Lord Janner.*

*He even claimed that some members of the group had murdered three boys during sex games. Nick claimed some of the abuse took place at Dolphin Square in Westminster. But despite Scotland Yard - which described the allegations as credible and true - launching an 18-month, £2.5 million investigation with 31 full time detectives, no evidence to support any of the claims was ever found.*

*What follows is a disturbing article, written in a UK context and is from the online weekly magazine Spiked. Much can and should be learned from what this article has to say.*

### **THE LATEST UK PAEDOPHILE PANIC HAS EXPOSED THE WILFUL CREDULITY OF OUR ELITES.**

**BY TIM BLACK - SPIKED COLUMNIST**

So, nearly four years after the Metropolitan Police launched Operation Midland, an investigation into claims that boys were abused and some even murdered by politicians, generals, spy chiefs and senior judges, in London's Dolphin Square in the 1970s and 1980s, the key witness known simply as 'Nick' has himself now been accused of breaking the law. For the second time: he was charged with making and possessing indecent images of children in February. This time, he has been charged with perverting the course of justice, by allegedly making up the stories against the Dolphin Square accused, and with defrauding the public purse by claiming £22,000 in compensation for abuse that allegedly never happened. It is quite a rise and fall for the crusade against sexual abuse, much of it historic. Six years ago, the Metropolitan Police launched Operation Fairbank, a scoping exercise into allegations that politicians and other senior public figures had been indulging in child sexual abuse. Such was the conviction that there was evidence enough to proceed, Fairbank gave birth to several specific criminal investigations – Fernbridge, Athabasc, Cayacos and, of course, Midland. At the time, all this was greeted with grim

fanfare, titillated headlines and excitable speculation. Arrests and police interviews followed where death had not made such proceedings impossible, as it had with some. Then home secretary Theresa May announced the all-purpose Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in 2014, just to firm up the impression the government was committed to excavating the darkest recesses of Britain's institutions.

And, then, towards the end of 2015, the wind in the sails of the crusade against child sex abuse in high places started to die. Charges against individuals were, in many cases, dropped. Operations such as Midland were shelved, and their multimillion-pound cost quietly regretted. And the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse lurched from one crisis to another, as successive chairs struggled with terms of reference, conflicts of interest, and, ultimately, the point to it all: was it justice for complainants or simply recognition of their victimhood?

And now an alleged victim of alleged abuse is to be put on trial. Specific questions will have to wait until after Nick's day in the judicial sun, when no doubt plenty of light will have been shed on how Operation Midland came to pass. But the more general question of how we got here can be posed today – the question of how myriad criminal investigations promised so much and delivered so little, and of how not a few significant politicians and public figures were allowed to be so publicly accused of crimes before the police, quietly and privately, dropped charges and abandoned their investigations.

The answer is to be found in the context. The crusade against child sexual abuse, which seemed to see abused children in the concealed annals of every institution in Britain, was informed ostensibly by the reaction to the Jimmy Savile sexual-abuse scandal, and also to the Rotherham and Rochdale grooming/sexual-exploitation cases. In each case, it was felt that those in positions of power neither did enough, nor, crucially, believed the victims enough, to intervene when they had the chance to do so. And front and centre of this criticism was the police and the legal system. They were just not credulous enough for purpose.

“they were accused of not believing enough”

As spiked's law editor Luke Gittos pointed out time and again, they were accused of not believing enough. If we were to avoid another case like Rotherham or Rochdale, when someone alleges abuse, no matter how historic and difficult to prove, it must be believed. So, in March 2013, then director of public prosecutions, Keir Starmer, effectively urged the police to stop being so incredulous, and just believe. He told the BBC there was an *'overcautious'* approach to victims, and that *'We cannot afford another Savile moment'*. And then, later the following year, as former Met commander Gary Copson pointed out last week, Sir Tom Winsor, Her Majesty's chief inspectorate of constabulary, published a report into police handling and recording of offences, and asserted that those alleging sexual offences must be *'believed'* while a crime is being recorded.

“Why was there such a willingness to believe the absolute worst of people?”

With the imperative to believe the accounts of those alleging sexual offences being enforced from on high, was it any wonder that criminal investigations and official inquiries into historical child sexual abuse began to proliferate? Was it any wonder that the genuine cases of abuse were potentially lost amid the welter of other allegations, with some being offered a false hope of closure? And was it any wonder that too many investigations seemed to rest on rather shaky evidential foundations? After all, the question of whether complainants' accounts were true, and whether they could be proved or not, was deemed secondary to the demand, first and foremost, simply to believe a complainant's account.

Yet, in a sense, the political and legal priority seemingly being granted to the mantra of *'believe the victim'* raises another question. That is, why was there such a desire to believe? Why was there such a willingness to believe the absolute worst of people? And this touches on something that runs deeper than the post-Savile context in which the scales of justice

were weighted in favour of alleged victims. Indeed, it touches on that which has long fuelled the crusade against child abuse, through its peaks and troughs, from the Satanic panics of the 1980s, through to the NSPCC campaigns of the 1990s and 2000s, to the post-Savile hysteria of today – namely, the deeply felt societal absence of some form of moral certitude. And that absence, that need for moral clarity, transforms itself into a need for the existence of evil, a folk devil around which society’s moral consensus might be built. That’s what the figure of the child abuser, the contemporary embodiment of evil, provides: a compass in morally disoriented times, a clear sense of where right and wrong are located. And for institutions, from parliament to the police, wracked by crises of authority, moral and otherwise, waging war on the paedophile, on evil, offers a shot at redemption.

You can hear this desperate need in Labour deputy leader Tom Watson’s assertions, made in parliament in 2012, of the evil lurking within Westminster, of the existence of ‘*a powerful paedophile network linked to parliament and No10*’. And you could hear it again when he called one soon-to-be-deceased ex-minister, ‘*as close to evil as any human being can get*’. Watson was convinced that this was the case. Not because of an overwhelming weight of evidence. But because he believed it to be. Because he wanted the evil to exist that would furnish him with a moral mission.

Watson was far from alone, of course. He was merely the most forceful, demented and unapologetic of the crusaders. And there is the problem: too many believed. And they did so, not because they were wilfully credulous, but because they desperately, almost existentially, wanted to believe the worst.

## ***TUSLA STAFF VINDICATED BY COURT OF APPEAL***

It is always interesting how the media will seize on any opportunity to criticise bodies such as Tusla but will not rush to print when something happens that vindicates Tusla and / or those who work for it.

True to form, very little publicity was given during the summer to the fact that the Court of Appeal had criticised a High Court Judge, Richard Humphreys for “*unfair*” censure of Tusla which was based on “*highly dubious speculation*”.

The three judge appeal court rejected strident criticism made by Judge Humphreys about three Tusla workers. He had criticised the Tusla staff involved even though, interestingly, the man who had brought proceedings did not complain about their conduct. The court further noted that Judge Humphrey’s suggestion that one of the Tusla workers was engaged in concealing abuse was “*unjust and based solely upon highly dubious speculation*”. It also noted that the workers’ handling of the case was “*quite correct; “was carried out in accordance with the codes of practice applicable”*; that the workers conducted their work “*to the highest ethical standards*” and that the Tusla reports were “*models of their kind*”.

The outcome of this is a welcome endorsement of the dedication and ethical standards of the workers involved in this case and hopefully a boost for others in Tusla who strive daily to achieve similar standards in the work they do.

### ***Food for thought...***

*“Is it not a prime characteristic of adolescents that they do not accept false solutions? They have a fierce morality which accepts only that which feels real, and this is a morality that also characterizes infancy. It is a morality that goes much deeper than wickedness, and has as its motto, ‘to thine own self be true’. The adolescent is engaged in trying to find the self to be true to. This is linked with the fact that, as I have said, the cure for adolescence is the passage of time, a fact which has very little meaning for the adolescent.”*

*Excerpt From: D. W. Winnicott, Clare Winnicott, Ray Shepherd & Madeleine Davis (1984) Deprivation and Delinquency. London, Tavistock Publications*

## ***OBERSTOWN REPORT?***

**The following answer was given in response to Dáil queries about the non-publication of the Oberstown Report. This is what Minister Katherine Zappone had to say when TDs Clare Daly and Denise Mitchell sought explanations.**

**“** I have concluded that it is not appropriate to publish the full report.

*The Operational Review of Oberstown Children Detention Campus was commissioned by the Board of Management of Oberstown in September 2016. The final report was received by the Board in February 2017.*

*It is imperative that a report of this kind should observe due process and fair procedures, so that all persons referred to are treated appropriately. The Board of Oberstown has taken legal advice on the question of publication.*

*On the basis of careful examination, the Board was not in a position to satisfy itself, or me, that fair procedures*

*had been applied before the report was finalised and submitted. In light of this advice, and of my own careful consideration of the matter, I have concluded that it is not appropriate to publish the full report. However, the recommendations of the report, all of which are at the kernel of how we move forward, were published in July 2017 and are being implemented as part of a significant package of reform in Oberstown.*

*I am pleased that over the past two years there is evidence of positive change in the day to day operations. I met with some young people when I visited Oberstown on a number of occasions in recent months. These young people were anxious that the many positives about Oberstown should be highlighted.*

*In addition to the Operational Review, the Board commissioned a number of other reports at the same time, with a view to engaging external expertise to support the development of the Campus. These reviews included security, health and safety and behaviour management.*

*I established a Review Implementation Group which began work in March 2017 and has collated, categorised and analysed these recommendations. The Group's final report, received in December 2017, produced a coherent plan to implement the various recommendations. Many of the recommendations are matters relating to the operations of the Campus.*

*Others relate to the oversight, strategy and policy activity of both the Board of Management and the Irish Youth Justice Service within my Department. The updated Action Plan from the Review Implementation Group was completed in May 2018 and was published on my Department's website.*

*HIQA is authorised by me under Sections 185 and 186 of the Children Act 2001 to undertake inspections of Oberstown Children Detention Campus. The most recent was an unannounced inspection over 5 days last March.*

*In this context, HIQA accepted an invitation from Oberstown to review the report of the Operational Review. I would hope that the report of the findings from the inspection, which is due to be published shortly, will reflect the positive improvements at Oberstown. I understand the report will be published in the next few weeks.*

*A key priority for my Department is the implementation of key recommendations to bring about improvements in standards, which is now well underway. My Department will support and, where appropriate, monitor the changes which need to take place to ensure that international standards and best practice are observed and that any barriers or challenges to maintaining an ethos of care are identified and addressed.*

## **AND ANOTHER OBERSTOWN STORY...**

This article by Sunday Times journalist, Brenda Power, raises one or two very pertinent questions.

*An ice cream van calls to Oberstown Detention Centre every Thursday and the inmates, all under 18, choose a treat. Recently, one boy was refused his weekly 99 cone as punishment for particularly aggressive behaviour towards the centre's staff.*

*Since many of the detainees are accused of very serious offences, it is fair to assume that the staff's threshold for behaviour unacceptable enough to forfeit a treat is pretty high. Yet, following a complaint from the boy, the two staff members involved are facing disciplinary action. Another employee was reported by a boy who wasn't allowed to watch his choice of TV programme.*

*Even permissive parents withhold treats, like ice cream and television time, to punish disobedience, and yet these mild measures are not available to staff dealing with the most criminally disruptive of youngsters.*

*Just as well they don't have a naughty step or the UN would be on the case.*

A lot of people never get beyond the first dimension of life. They use other people as mere steps by which they can climb to their goals and their ambitions. These people don't work out well in life. They may go for a while, they may think they're making it alright, but there is a law. They call it the law of gravitation in the physical universe and it works, it's final, it's inexorable: whatever goes up can come down. You shall reap what you sow. MLK

## **EMPATHY OVER-RATED?**

**Editor's Note: I have this article saved but cannot find the author. With apologies to the author and hoping this piece raises some questions for all of us.**

Empathy is overrated. I know this is heresy. Before you light your torch and grab your pitchfork, hear me out.

We live in a world suffused with psychological language. Even in fields that are not traditionally considered to be "touchy-feely," leaders are likely to be expected to know how to increase their team's emotional intelligence, help employees build emotional self-management skills or increase a sense of belonging and community.

This is good. My "day job" is focused on teaching others these skills. In fact, my institution has helped lead the creation of an emerging social science entirely focused on how to strengthen relationships between individuals as well as social connections within communities.

In part, this mirrors the positive development of the field of psychology as a whole. As we understand more about the mind of the human person and how we relate to each other, we apply those insights to a wider range of settings – such as workplaces. On the other hand...

We have also seen the rise of popular psychology and an entire industry related to self-help and pseudo-scientific ideas about emotion. These ideas are often based on what we wish were true about people, instead of the reality of human relationships. One perfect example is the perceived role of empathy in conflict.

The ability to understand another's feelings and thoughts from their point of view is a great skill. Honing your ability to do this will help you make more nuanced decisions and relate to others with more skill and sensitivity.

“These ideas are often based on what we wish were true about people, instead of the reality of human relationships.”

But here's the problem. Empathy has become a bit of an idol, a panacea, a magical thing that promises to end all conflict and allow leaders and staff to exist on a higher and more sensitive plane of existence.

As I've discussed in this blog before, most people seek to avoid conflict. Accordingly, popular pseudo-psychology has encouraged the belief that if we just had more empathy we'd have less conflict. So, we don't need to do the difficult work of confronting people on their behavior, which is really unpleasant and scary. We just need to start empathizing more! After all, unlike leading conflict, empathizing makes me feel great about myself and is less risky. Problem solved!

I exaggerate, but not by much in the case of some leaders and workplaces.

Empathy is essential to healthy human relationships, but it's not a cure-all. The presence of empathy does not negate the need for limit-setting and does not necessarily lead to behavior change.

Simply empathizing changes nothing. Behavior change requires pressure, concrete plans, and a willingness to move beyond talking about feelings and into action. Expression of empathy is a good beginning to a conversation, but it's not an end unto itself.

“Expression of empathy is a good beginning to a conversation, but it's not an end unto itself.

Empathy is only one good among many in the list of leadership skills and abilities. An over-emphasis on empathy in leadership can lead to a reluctance to cause others discomfort. After all, if you really empathized with others, you wouldn't want to cause them discomfort, right?

This is a serious problem in many workplaces. As a leader, a big part of your job is to make other people uncomfortable on a regular basis. Being uncomfortable is a natural part of learning and the development of expertise. And as a leader, you should be the teacher-in-chief before you are the empathizer-in-chief. Be an empathetic teacher, not a teaching empath.

Too much reliance on empathy can even lead to rewarding good work with creepy things like this.

Overplaying the importance of empathy can also lead to the erroneous belief among colleagues that they should never be made to experience difficult, negative or uncomfortable feelings.

Here's an example from my personal life. I once confronted someone I was close to about their pattern of manipulatively using anger, threats and histrionics during conflict. I discussed how scary, difficult and damaging this behavior was for me and others.

The response from that person was, *“How can you say these things to me? How do you think it makes me feel when you tell me things like this?”* To which my response was, *“Well, I assume you feel bad. And that would be appropriate.”* We are no longer close. And that's a good thing.

The most effective leaders are empathetic to those around them in a general way, while also being able and willing to cause discomfort to others as needed. Growth and learning requires some amount of pain and sacrifice.

None of us feels what everyone around us is feeling, nor should we. That would be really exhausting and unhealthy. We understand the feelings of others. We care about the experiences of others. We listen to others. But their feelings are their feelings and our feelings are our own. How to make sense of that information and what you do with it is what matters most when leading conflict.

But the Good Samaritan came by and he reversed the question. Not ‘What will happen to me if I stop to help this man?’ but ‘What will happen to this man if I do not stop to help him?’ This was why that man was good and great. MLK

## ***SOCIAL CARE WORK - THE BIGGER PICTURE***

*BY DR LUCY WEIR*

I was talking to a sex worker. Social care takes you to all kinds of places and scenarios you never expected to go, and in this case, the woman was attempting to complete her studies as a mature student and hadn't known where else to go to find the money to live on, except to sell the only thing she had left: herself. We'd met in a bar. She asked me what I did. I said I worked with people whose choices were limited by circumstance, and who were often marginalised as a result. I've worked with people whose childhoods are punctuated by violence, or laced with the deception of a smiling front behind which sexual predation or neglect make merry hell. I've worked with refugees and asylum seekers, escapees from horror into the miasma of detention centres or camps with razor wire, struggling to resist the implicit indoctrination into helplessness. I've worked with people with intellectual disabilities who rage at their fate, or are paralysed with fear. It's exhausting, like being in a tempest with no sign or sight of shore. She said she understood.

We talked about the idea I've always been really interested in: the idea of freedom, in how much choice people actually have, particularly to do good or harm. I talked about the only place I'd ever felt at home when I was eight, a place of steep sloping hills, heather, pinewoods, granite, cold brown lochs, and the long snake of the Spey river meandering north and east. A couple of years later, two things had happened. I was institutionalised, and I was

“It's exhausting, like being in a tempest with no sign or sight of shore.”

exposed to porn. It fucked things up for me, because there was no language for me to talk about what I'd encountered, no tools for taking responsibility or allotting blame.

My interest in freedom, in how free we are to do good or harm, came, at least in part, from this. I'm now writing a book about it. If I had to sum it up, I'd say my book is about what we are, our human nature, and what this means for our idea of freedom to do good or harm. But I'm not just interested in the human. The most urgent and critical issue of our time is the ecological emergency, which is a way to talk about climate change, pollution, fragmentation of natural systems, and all the other related human-caused issues that surround and inhabit our lives now. We, the human species, are in a juggernaut, heading for a cliff.

We understand right and wrong, good and bad, almost instinctively. But almost everything we do is an involuntary reaction to what is happening to us, so labelling our reactions as right, wrong, good or bad makes no real sense. The sex worker doesn't seek to hurt her friends and family: she's desperate to survive. Adolescents in care are, on the whole, not malicious, but fighting for survival in a world they can understand, a world that started as a chaos they can recognise, and therefore that they seek to recreate. We can understand everything humans do on the spectrum of reaction. Reaction runs from hydrogen reacting with oxygen, right through to the triggers that provoke us to anger or fear. The ecological emergency is a manifestation of the same thing: a series of involuntary reactions, short-term survival strategies that, in the longer term, cause irreparable harm.

There is a way out, though. An accident of evolution has favoured a 'what if?' clause in humans: we have imagination, and the weirdest thing of all, consciousness, which includes being able to pay attention, to see what is happening while it is happening. This function we can call awareness, or realisation. It's a fraction of a second consideration of what is happening as it is happening, right now.

When we realise that we are reacting, as is everything else on the planet, we can picture ourselves as caught in a web, or mesh, of intersecting circumstances, none of which we chose. We can see that this is true not just of us, but also of our parents, and all humans, and also, because humans are evolved, of all other living systems, and beyond. Nothing sets out to harm or benefit another. Systems, particularly living systems, attempt to avoid annihilation and take the first option open to them each time. Imagine looking down at all this from the outside and seeing the great struggle to keep entropy at bay, and you've got it. None of us is to blame.

When we realise this, a strange thing happens. We don't become compassionate but compassion, or pity mixed with love, wells up in us. We're human. This is natural, too, like seeing a child tripping and struggling to run from a tsunami. We cannot help but feel the tug of a great emotion, the welling up of empathy.

There are, of course, psychoses that preclude compassion as a response, but they're a different category and, sadly, isolation from and protection of the rest is probably the only solution in that case. Yet for the vast majority of us, the compassionate attitude that is elicited by realisation opens up a whole new set of possible responses. Instead of the inevitable triggers to react, we have other options. This is not free choice in the traditional sense: we do not choose. Our attitude chooses.

In the medieval Zen philosophy of Dogen, "*sitting with*" what is going on wakes us up to the realisation that we are enmeshed, and that only our attitude can disentangle us from inevitable response reactions. Realisation is a two-fold process. We both realise, as in become aware of, and open up realities that were hitherto latent.

Our survival, individually and as a species, depends on revising our understanding of free will to incorporate this sense of realisation. It won't be easy. But like any scientific understanding, from Copernicus, through Darwin to Hawking and current evolutionary psychology, we incorporate new theories that better reflect how things actually are, and make progress. Shifting how we see ourselves is now a critical element

of this process that has run from the findings of the Enlightenment to now. It is crucial in the context of social care, because in a crisis, those on the margins tend to be the first to be thrown out of the lifeboat, whereas in fact, they have undergone the greatest challenges to survival, and therefore have the highest potential to teach the rest of us about resilience, and the benefits, when they experience them, of a compassionate attitude.

“Becoming self-responsible is fundamental on the therapeutic journey.

My plan, when I finish this book, is to work on opening an ecotherapeutic community that will be based on realisation as agency, and compassion as the attitude that allows us to step back and elicit alternative responses. Becoming self-responsible is fundamental on the therapeutic journey, and the ecological context and our relationship to it, is a manifestation of how we exercise this responsibility both to ourselves and to the more-than-human world. This is actually the only way we can develop or restore any sense

of connectedness for people who have become fragmented and isolated from the context that they need for survival, which is the more-than-human context.

None of this is ideologically based. I'm anti-idealistic and I know that there will be challenges to the theory, and more challenges when I put it into practice, but a theory based on science, rationalism, and humanism is open to amendments and debate, which is why I agreed to attempt to summarise my work here. I see no other way of responding to the emergency than to work on ourselves and our relationships, human and beyond. What is broken, when seen from this perspective, is our relationship with ourselves. We are all in this emergency together. As its impact emerges more, we can either decide to limit access to resources, thus creating a '*lifeboat*' ethic that leaves vast numbers to perish, or we can seek a way to create resilience in as many of us as possible so that we help one another. The latter - cooperation, and responsiveness - is the survival strategy that has ensured the longevity of every complex evolved system that is around today, from rainforests to kelp forests to rotting logs to ... us. Competition, which says, we win, you lose, and operates behind the lifeboat ethic, is a short term, reactionary strategy that deepens distrust and fragmentation, weakening survival chances for the species as a whole. The strategy we choose will create the society that survives this emergency. Compassion, and its corollary in a wider ecological context, cooperation, is a proven winner. What will remain of us, as a species, is the trace

“This is not free choice in the traditional sense: we do not choose. Our attitude chooses.

we leave as a result of our attitude, which shapes our relationship with the world, and which can, if we choose to allow it, be the guiding force of love.

***Dr. Lucy Weir is a social care worker with the Anne Sullivan Centre, Dublin.***

You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and your verb agree to serve. You don't have to know about Plato and Aristotle to serve. You don't have to know Einstein's theory of relativity to serve. You don't have to know the second theory of thermodynamics in physics to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love.  
MLK

## ***SCI DISABILITY SIG CONFERENCE***

On October 10<sup>th</sup> the Disability Special Interest Group of Social Care Ireland held a conference in Dublin on the theme of Advocacy & Decision Making. The conference was very well attended and provoked much discussion around what will be a very important and intricate situation for social care workers into the future where they may have responsibility under the Assisted Decision Making Capacity Act (2015). Great credit is due to the members of the Disability SIG for the effort put into this event.

One of the speakers, Moira Jenkins, Cork IT Law Lecturer, gave a challenging presentation paper entitled The social care professional as accomplice and outlaw. She made three basic points that apply to social care workers

- As a matter of professional ethics we must (*re*)claim advocacy as a fundamental, defining element in social care practice and at the heart of the duty to care
- We need to decide what the community of social care professionals consists of, stands for and how we will support one another. We need real communities not fictional or fantasy ones
- Advocacy is more than amplifying voice or communicating wishes. Advocacy requires 'a vigour, a vehemence, a commitment ... a high cost, often in the form of risk' (*Wolfensberger cited in Morgan 2017:195*)

Ms Jenkins pointed out that the new Director of the Decision Support Service, Aine Flynn, has indicated that the National Disability Authority and the HSE are drafting an extensive Codes of Practice to guide health and social care professionals and that a staff team of up to 50 people is to be recruited.

Ms Jenkins spoke about the relevance of CPRD (*Convention on Rights of People with Disabilities*) and the need to recognise that this Convention is very definite on the role of people with disabilities and that in respect of CPRD, representative organisations are those '*led, directed and governed by persons with disabilities themselves*'. After referencing the many broken promises, since at least 1996, on the statutory right to an advocate for people with disabilities she went on to refer to a clear hierarchy of ethical duties for social care beyond the disclosure of wrong doing. She said "*The professional bodies and registration board must make clear that asserting and fulfilling the human and civil rights of the person supported is the first and paramount duty of the social care professional and that 'reasonable care' cannot be achieved in the absence of the time, trouble and money required to avoid and minimise the enormity of a determination of a lack of decision making capacity*".

“...clear hierarchy of ethical duties for social care beyond the disclosure of wrong doing.”

In closing, Ms Jenkins adverted to her favourite part of the CPRD, Article 30 (2) which she compared to a kind of grown ups equivalent of the right to play: "*States Parties shall take appropriate measures to enable persons with disabilities to have the opportunity to develop and utilise their creative, artistic and intellectual potential, not only for their own benefit, but also for the enrichment of society*".

Stephen Hennessy and Ursella Bishop spoke and gave examples of the Lived Experience of Self Advocates from their own perspective. Ursella outlined steps she had taken as a wheel chair user to ensure that her mobility was not impaired in the immediate area around where she lives. She secured a number of improvements after approaching South Dublin Co. Council with pictures and a signed petition of support. All in all, a very encouraging and uplifting part of the conferencing.

Sarah Lennon, the Communications & Information Manager with Inclusion Ireland spoke on an Irish Human Rights & Equality Commission project that Inclusion Ireland did which developed terms of reference for “*Rights Committee*” in services.

Dr Eilionoir Flynn spoke by video link on How Professionals working in social care can support the broad spectrum of advocacy practice.

Noel Howard spoke briefly on a) recalling the memory of Miceal Burke, a member of the SCI Disability SIG who died on August 1<sup>st</sup> this year and b) the upcoming research into Violence towards staff in the Disability Sector which will shortly begin through the CARL programme in UCC. Details will be announced in the coming weeks.

### ***SOME FEEDBACK FROM THE DAY:***

- All talks were very informative but particularly Moira’s talk and the discussion afterwards was also very educative.
- Presentation excellent, great example of self-advocacy, good ref: to read up on reports or books.
- Very informative on Capacity Act and how to implement in daily practice.
- Very interesting speakers and viewpoints of all present, good opportunity to interact.
- Very informative.
- I will return to my company with a more simplified, practical way of understanding the capacity act and ADM.
- I felt this was a great opportunity for me to reflect on the changing landscape of social care and a chance to learn from some very good people in the field.

## ***YOUTH ADVOCATE PROGRAMME(YAP) IRELAND***

***BY AISLING NODWELL***

Following the discussions at the conference I wanted to share with you some information on a new pilot programme developed with YAP Ireland and the HSE. Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland have recently set up Ireland first Independent Advocacy Service for young people in an adolescent inpatient setting. In 2017 we established this service in Saint John of God’s Hospital. Since then we have set up a pilot programme which was launched in April 2018 with the HSE and Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland (YAP) CGL. This was established within the Child and Adolescent inpatient unit at Merlin Park Galway. The service has now been rolled out to include community teams across the CHO2 area. YAP Ireland provides this service to patients of CAMH’s, independently of the HSE. This is a very new service but we hope that by early 2019 to have the service available to all active CAMHS patients across CHO area 2.

I thought it would be useful to be aware that such a service now exists for young people engaged with CAMHS. This is a departure for YAP Ireland’s usual services we provide. I have outlined below a little about YAP Ireland’s model.

Youth Advocate Programmes (YAP) Ireland is a leading provider of intensive support programmes for young people and families. YAP Ireland uses a strengths based, family focused approach for young people with very complex needs, leading to positive outcomes for the young people, their families and referral agents. The YAP Model is a unique way of providing intensive, focused support to children, young people and families with a range of needs. The YAP model is based upon the development of a trust relationship built between a supportive, trained, skilled adult advocate, the young person and their

“...supports that will remain in place after programme involvement has ended.

family. An individual service plan based on the strengths of the young person and their family is developed and offers a wraparound approach to address all aspects of the needs of the young person within their family and local community. YAP's goal is to empower young people and their families with supports that will remain in place after programme involvement has ended. The model is flexible and can be adapted to meet the needs of a wide range of client groups.

### UNIQUE FEATURES OF YAP MODEL

- Strengths based, needs-led, wraparound, intensive support model with proven success.
- The flexibility of the service – NO EJECT, NO REJECT POLICY AND NEVER GIVE-UP APPROACH
- The ability to take in emergency cases and respond rapidly
- Ability to provide service in both urban and rural areas where there are fewer services for young people, families and other services to rely on when children are at risk.
- On-call service 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 52 weeks a year.
- Recruit, train and employ advocates from local communities on a fixed term basis.
- Work with young people and families, mostly takes place out of office hours and at the weekends.
- Outcomes measurement systems in place measuring the impact of the YAP service on young people and families.
- YAP Ireland carries out monitoring of the service twice during the lifetime of the case to ensure that parents/carers are happy with the service.
- Can use existing management structures to set up services in new areas. We will invest in new areas and payment will only be necessary for places that are used.
- YAP Ireland has developed local, regional and national participation structures and has retained the Investing in Children Membership award to date.

YAP Ireland are thrilled to be able to deliver an Independent Advocacy Service for young people accessing mental health services in Ireland.

Aisling M Nodwell | Service Manager | Youth Advocate Programmes Ireland | Park House 191-193A | North Circular Road | Dublin 7

Mobile: 087 1881846 | Email: [aislingmn@yapireland.ie](mailto:aislingmn@yapireland.ie)

Website: [www.yapireland.ie](http://www.yapireland.ie)



## INVITATION

The Disability Federation of Ireland, University of Limerick and Johnson & Johnson, through their joint venture;

SOLA – The Centre of Excellence for Sustainable Quality

are pleased to invite you to their annual Symposium

*“Sustainable Quality in the Community, Voluntary & Disability Sector 2018”*

Date: **Friday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2018**

Time: 10:00am to 2:30pm

Venue: The Pavilion, University of Limerick

Delegate Fee: €55

Concession fees

Students/OAPs/PWD/DFI Members/Unwaged/Volunteers-  
Please inquire

For further information visit

[www.disability-federation.ie/sola/events/](http://www.disability-federation.ie/sola/events/)

Presentation Topics Include: Quality Processes, Quality Management Systems, Standards, Governance, Charity Regulations and much more.

Morning refreshments, tea/coffee and Lunch are provided.

Please let us know if you have dietary or access requirements. A provisional booking for Irish Sign Language Interpreter will be made, but will only be confirmed if, a week in advance, we have confirmed registration of people who have requested the service.

To register contact Claire Gallery

061 202960 [claire.gallery@u](mailto:claire.gallery@u)

Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly. MLK



Aishling Lambe at the Disability SIG Conference



Moira Jenkins, CIT, addressing delegates

Never, never be afraid to do what's right, especially if the well-being of a person or animal is at stake. Society's punishments are small compared to the wounds we inflict on our soul when we look the other way. MLK

## ***RACHEL KUSHNER'S "THE MARS ROOM"***

***REVIEW BY CARINA JEISY • PUBLISHER: JONATHAN CAPE (2018)***

We meet Romy Hall on a prison transport bus; she's twenty nine years old, a stripper, drug abuser, and single mother. Her crime was killing a man, a stalker who harassed her incessantly for months. *'The Mars Room'* is a crude, raw, vicious and often violent account of her turbulent life, culminating in the receipt of two consecutive life sentences at California's Stanville Women's Prison.

A fellow prisoner dies on the bus. Nobody cares.

*'Lack of care'* is pervasive throughout the novel. Lack of familial care, of societal care and perhaps, overall, of self-care. Drug abuse saturates the pages; doing drugs, dealing drugs, smuggling drugs into prison, getting highs from cocktails of prison medication made possible by the retention of pills in one's mouth using peanut butter. The ingenuity of the women in detention is astounding.

Kushner's familiarity with San Francisco delinquent youths is evident by her vivid description of children living on the streets. Many graduate to this Californian women prison, a place where acts of violence by prisoners and guards are commonplace. The characters are less than alluring and immersing oneself in the lives of these women deprived of almost everything (*even plants are forbidden*) and bundled into confined spaces makes scary reading. As we familiarise ourselves with Romy and her fellow inmates, we see resounding similarities in their pasts. Not a loving parent in sight, they have all experienced sexual abuse (*especially by step-fathers which seems 'de rigueur'*) beatings and extreme violence. We meet Laura Lipp, who killed her baby in revenge against her man. There's Betty LaFrance, a former tights model who ordered one too many hits; Candy Pena who stabbed a child dozens of times while high on PCP. We meet bullies and trans-women.

Men feature too; there's Gordon Hauser, a prison teacher who has sometimes inappropriate fondness for his pupils and signs of humanity; he mails letters and buys craft sets and flower seeds (*contraband*) for the women. His interest in literature appears as diaries, an element of the book which I found confusing as I thought they were his diaries until I had finished the book and researched to discover they were actually the diaries of Ted Kaczynski's, a 1970's academic turned terrorist.

The “*Mars Room*” itself is a strip club where Romy worked and met her stalker, the death of whom has severed her from the outside world and ultimately her young son, Jackson, whom she had loved and cared for, and on whose behalf she had killed. The jury only saw the brutality of the crime and the reader becomes aware early on in the book of the weak legal representation made available by the system to poor, working class women. It is ironic that the only loving parent we come across in the entire book finds herself in a situation where she is unable to parent.

Édouard Louis refers to the French poor as the ‘*invisible people*’. The ‘*invisibles*’ in ‘*The Mars Room*’ are American women prisoners, moved in the dead of night so no one in the real world has to see them. The book is not only comment on

a flawed American legal system – the fact that thousands of disadvantaged females are given scant legal representation and scooped out of society to be placed in inhumane institutional living - the irony of the contemporaneous Iraqi war does not escape mention; heroes glorified for killing thousands. Notwithstanding, because of their lifestyle choices, these women are to be kept safely confined to the pages of the book. Their former life experience however definitely evokes an element of empathy in the reader.

Romy’s son lives in care, but having experienced the only love she has ever known, that between mother and son, and though only for a short time, it has made her life worthwhile. It reminded me of the Tennyson quote, ‘*Tis better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all.*’ Perhaps the book ends in a kind of cliché about love, but after such a brilliant yet gruelling read, in this instance, clichés works just fine.

“ It is ironic that the only loving parent we come across in the entire book finds herself in a situation where she is unable to parent.

If I cannot do great things, I can do small things in a great way. MLK

## ***LEGAL PROTECTION INSURANCE FOR FULL TIME MEMBERS OF SOCIAL CARE IRELAND***

One of the benefits for fully paid up, full time members of Social Care Ireland, is Legal Expenses Protection insurance. This policy is underwritten by DAS Legal Expenses Insurance Company, and arranged by Social Care Ireland through Glennon Insurance Brokers.

As part of this cover, the insurers will defend a members legal rights if an event arising from the member’s work as an employee, leads to the member being prosecuted in a criminal court and/or if the members is subject to a civil prosecution under specific Employment and Data Protection Legislation. Likewise, a similar defence can be put in place for a member where an event leads to the members prosecution in connection with the use or the driving of a motor vehicle.

The cover is subject to a specific limit of indemnity and the terms and conditions of the policy. Members who have queries in relation to the this cover should contact Glennon Insurance Brokers on 01-7075800.

The legal protection insurance for members also provides for a helpline providing legal advice , and a helpline providing a confidential counselling service over the phone.

The cover is subject to a limit of indemnity of €33,000 per member in any one period of insurance, and the terms and conditions of the policy. Members who have queries in relation to the this cover should contact Glennon Insurance Brokers on 01-7075800.

True compassion is more than flinging a coin to a beggar; it comes to see that an edifice which produces beggars needs restructuring. MLK

## SIX PORTRAITS

REVIEW BY CARINA JEISY

The Institute of Technology Blanchardstown's 3<sup>rd</sup> year Creative Digital Media Student, Conor Diggin is to be commended on his short but excellent documentary film, 'Six Portraits.'

The film outlines the joint educational project that takes place between ITB and the Daughters of Charity Service, where learners with an intellectual disability are integrated in the classroom with social care and horticulture students. Beginning as a pilot project in 2009, the 'learning together' project became official in 2011. Siobhan Cleary, the facilitator from the Daughters of Charity, speaks of classes where learners attend tutorials in health, wellbeing and creative studies, cognisant of the principles of inclusion as set out in the Education for Persons with Special Educational Needs (EPSEN) Act 2004.

Dr Denise Lyons, one of the lecturers involved in the project, brought the joy of this particular work home, and because of this, her husband, the artist Jim Donnelly proposed doing portraits of the six learners, to promote the project. As well as following Jim's journey in doing the portraits, the film also tells us how ITB's 'learning together' integrated approach to education is mutually beneficial for all the students and staff involved.

Jim wanted to paint beautiful portraits that would express the dignity and respect of the sitter and this is evident throughout the film. The documentary concludes with an art exhibition in Jim's Carlow studio to showcase not only the portraits that Jim had painted, but also to give an opportunity for the learners to invite people to see what they have been learning in college.

Jim states that the ITB's programme in conjunction with the Daughters of Charity is "a fantastic scheme and the portraits of the six learners is a good way of publicising the course". Overall the documentary showcases the benefits of learning together for social care students and people with diverse needs.



Above (L-R): Romaleg Nicer, Roisin O'Flanagan, Stephen Lee, Cian Gibney, Darragh Losty, Lee Roth  
To view Six Portraits, go to the following site; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d-ruABaL36I>

Shallow understanding from people of good will is more frustrating than absolute misunderstanding from people of ill will. Lukewarm acceptance is much more bewildering than outright rejection.  
MLK

## **A LETTER ABOUT BOOK ON JOHN CROSS**

Noel Howard read 'A Shared Experience John Cross His life, thoughts and writing' (Abbeyhill Press Totnes 2018. Price £7.95) written by Charles Sharpe, editor of [www.goodenoughcaring.com](http://www.goodenoughcaring.com).

Noel sent the letter below to the author.

*Dear Charles,*

*Congratulations on the publication of A Shared Experience. It is hard to believe that you only met John in 2008 because reading the book I get a feeling that somehow, you knew each other for far longer.*

*I think this book comes at a good time for those who work caring for children because, to use a phrase I've used elsewhere, the essence of caring is not about commodification but about relationships. In Ireland at any rate, social care workers are more than ever subjected to the jargon of supposed certainties which benefit no one, least of all, children with difficulties.*

*I find, in reading your book, that John was the real antidote to what now can tie social workers up in knots – on the one hand regularly encouraged to use their professional judgement and yet when they do, even with positive results, can find themselves facing a bureaucratic nightmare. There was a time, and this is perhaps another example of my dinosaur status, when one could write in a log book, "Tom had a very good morning", safe in the knowledge that those you worked with and worked for knew what was meant. Now, on good authority, I believe you must detail how and why Tom had a very good morning. The very core of the ebb and flow of life in residential care is now subject to the latest buzz words, one of which at the moment here is "journey". Everyone, from the cat to the King has to be on a journey of some sort. But enough of my meanderings and back to the book.*

*The saddest part for me has to be the boy saying to John on his being withdrawn from New Barns by his local authority, "John, you said I could always live here."*

*The most infuriating part was of course the story of the trial which kept bringing Arthur Miller's line in The Crucible to mind..."You are pulling down heaven and raising up a whore." Most striking of course is your description of John's lack of bitterness and resentment and in that I think he was better man than most. I know, in fact, I'm certain, I would be very far behind him in that attitude. Also, it was lovely to read of Attorney Jim Nichol being so impressed by what Eve Foster and Maureen Ward had to say. It struck me that they perhaps were the best inspection service a unit might hope for, somewhat removed but imbibing all that was good around them.*

*The anecdotes from those who worked with John were, as with most anecdotes about people in this kind of work, quirky and revealing. Of course his innate modesty and true sense of justice were what most come through in the book as well as a thorough delving into what constitutes the therapeutic task.*

*Interesting you mention that John had no great reliance on theoretical matters and yet there is a very evident theoretical base in his conversations with you and the extracts from his writings. Also, you get across the idea that he has always about with his cup of tea and that can't be said of many managers now pressurised by all kinds of bureaucratic demands.*

*Applicable I think to John also and to many who worked with him are those lines from Wordsworth:*

*That best portion of a good man's life.*

*His little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love.*

*I hope, Charles, that the book gets the readership it richly deserves and well done in bringing John's life and times to us.*

“The saddest part for me has to be the boy saying to John on his being withdrawn from New Barns by his local authority, ‘John, you said I could always live here.’”

**A full review of this book by Noel Howard will appear in the forthcoming edition of IJASS (Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies)**



# SCI

## SOCIAL CARE IRELAND

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€96.00 or €9.00 per month	€50.00	€75.00	€40.00
Open to Social Care Workers, Managers and Team Leaders	Open to allied professionals or individuals interested in social care	Open to first year post qualifying who were student members	Open to undergraduates working toward an approved social care qualification

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SCI provides Members with advocacy, representation and support in the practice of Social Care Work, as well as an opportunity to improve the Standards and Quality of Social Care Work in Ireland. Social Care Ireland welcomes members from across the Social Care Work profession, including Workers, Managers, Educators, and Students and interested members of the public.

*Membership of Social Care Ireland includes the following Benefits:*

- Free CPD Portfolio, Resources and Support in meeting statutory requirements of registration with CORU.
- Reduced Rates at Conferences, Lectures, Training and other Social Care Ireland Continuing Professional Development (CPD) Events.
- Invitation to CPD Events at a reduced rate.
- Professional Advice and Support from Social Care Ireland Office, Board and CPD Coordinator.
- Participation in Special Interest Groups and Committees.
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- Access to 'Curam' Magazine and 'The Link' Newsletter.
- Online access to all previous editions of IJASS and CPD Bulletins plus access to past 'Curam' Magazines and The Link Newsletters.
- Access to member only area through SCI website with access to additional resources and supports.
- Invitation to the Annual Social Care Ireland Conference and AGM.
- DAS Legal Protection Package including access to free counselling service.
- Job advertisements.
- 15% discount from Fermoy Print and Design for printing Theses, Reports etc.
- Access to [www.childlink.ie](http://www.childlink.ie) providing valuable resources and information for Social Care.
- Access to Cornmarket Group Financial Services – financial advice.

*Future Benefits will include:*

- Fitness to Practice Insurance Cover

Social Care Ireland CLG is run by a Board with Worker, Management and Educator participation. It continually provides advocacy on behalf of the Social Care Sector, so JOIN NOW.

You will be enhancing the growth and status of your profession as well as enjoying the membership benefits of being involved and being kept informed of developments which affect you and the Social Care Sector.



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Office B118, The Linc Centre,  
Institute of Technology  
Blanchardstown,  
Blanchardstown Road North,  
Dublin 15

Ph: 087 746 3926  
W: [socialcareireland.ie](http://socialcareireland.ie)



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