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Social Care Workers are professional practitioners engaged in the practice of social care work. Social care work is a relationship based approach to the purposeful planning and provision of care, protection, psychosocial support and advocacy in partnership with vulnerable individuals and groups who experience marginalisation, disadvantage or special needs. Principles of social justice and human rights are central to the practice of Social Care Workers (CORU)

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THE MORE THINGS CHANGE THE MORE THEY STAY THE SAME

I have been editing Curam for nearly thirty years and there has been one recurring problem. If you were given three chances to answer what that has been, you probably would come up with the correct answer. Getting social care workers to submit views, opinions, articles, gripes or positive stories has been a perennial problem and I don’t see that changing very much into the future. In fact, it was probably easier to get material from individual workers twenty years ago than now, despite all the advances so evident in the intervening period.

Today, social care workers find themselves in an ever-increasing pressurised situation and even what are positives for the profession as a whole (*e.g., registration*) will, whether we like to believe it or not add to that pressure. The nature of social care work in the residential, disability and community sectors – often crisis driven - means there is little time for someone to sit down and pen an article about their work and how they find it. Maybe the proliferation of social media and time spent on it means that those in social care find that more easily accessible, more instantly responsive and yet surely at times more frustrating and annoying?

Lacking “*home-grown*” material to put into Curam twice a year has meant at varying stages that many editions have been digests rather than immediately pertinent, i.e., material is garnered from other sources to help fill different editions. While that in itself is not any harm and at times bring quite interesting articles from other sources – as in this edition - it can be dispiriting and begs the question, are those who work in social care so disinterested in their profession that they prefer to flick through social media and make their comments rather than take time, precious as it is, to contribute to social care’s long running bi-annual magazine?

If the answer to that is yes, then that’s a problem that may have to be admitted and faced up to, and a different attitude taken by the editor. Rather than encouraging, cajoling, begging and / or pestering members to contribute material maybe the reality is, that the dearth of material written for Curam by those in social care means that Curam completely becomes an on-line magazine solely presenting material from other sources that would effectively make it a digest.

It is my intention to write to the SCI board regarding the above with a view to getting its view of the situation. The next copy of The Link due out in March will hopefully have an update. In the mean- time if you have any ideas, etc., etc., do get in touch at nh99@eircom.net

FAMILIES ARE TORN APART BY UNREGULATED EXPERTS

by Brenda Power, Sunday Times – November 13th 2022

This article may resonate with social care workers who are often placed in situations of difficulty where child custody cases are being decided. Brenda's second shorter article may also be of interest.

'*Parental alienation*' in custody battles is being put above abuse and coercion

Recently, after I had written here about a man who had "*weaponised*" family law to oppress his ex-wife, a woman contacted me to say she feared that she and her children were also at risk of injustice behind the closed doors of a family court. We met, and she produced compelling evidence of the distress caused to her young children each week as they were reluctantly transferred to the care of their father as part of the custody arrangement.

A number of independent witnesses had written to the woman expressing their concerns at the scenes that routinely occurred, at the hand-over, after she departed, as the weeping children were being placed in their father's car. She had an affidavit from one witness which she claimed backed up her claims in relation to her ex's behaviour.

However, she was terrified that a court-appointed expert would recommend that the father be given full custody of the children. The expert found that the children were victims of "*parental alienation*", that the mother had wilfully turned them against their father, that their claims therefore should not be believed, and recommended that the father be given sole custody. The expert's opinion was accepted by a court.

This woman has not seen her young children for many months. She is a professional person in a position of trust, and yet she cannot be trusted with her own children on the word of this expert. She can only speak to them online when they sob constantly and beg to come home. I've seen a recording of one such contact, and it is haunting and heart-breaking.

Last week The Irish Times reported a case here in which a judge, who had previously jailed a father for assaulting his wife in front of their young child, went on to award the man majority custody on the report of another expert who had concluded that the woman was guilty of parental alienation. The child was taken from the building by the father, screaming: "*The judge is wrong, the judge is wrong.*"

Given all our handwringing over the forced removal of children from their mothers in this country in times past, such scenes should sound the loudest of alarm bells today.

By coincidence, similar questions are now being asked in the London High Court, where one of the country's most senior judges is examining concerns over the non-regulation of court-appointed experts who produce reports about child welfare in custody hearings.

In that case, a mother is challenging the qualifications and findings of the expert whose conclusions led to an order that resulted in her children being permanently removed from her care on the basis of the expert's finding that she had "*alienated*" them from their father. Despite the fact that a previous court had found the father guilty of "*coercive and controlling behaviour*", the expert's recommendations were accepted by a judge.

At present, there is no specified qualification, either psychiatric, psychological or paediatric, required by law of the experts who write these reports in both jurisdictions. The UK case is looking at the role of experts empowered to make these life-altering recommendations because there, as here, they are largely unregulated.

Under section 47 of our Family Law Act of 1995, the court has the discretion to appoint a probation or welfare officer as the minister for justice may nominate, a person nominated by a health board who in their opinion is "*suitably qualified*" or "*any other person specified in the order*" of the court to provide expert reports. The section does not specify what qualifications an expert should have nor does it set up a regulatory body to oversee issues relating to such experts specifically providing section 47 reports. As there is no oversight body regulating the provision of section 47 reports there's no knowing how many parents have had their children removed from their custody, partially or entirely, on the grounds of a finding of parental alienation.

But if the UK hearing finds that their government's failure to regulate child custody experts has breached the rights of parents and children there, expect a flood of similar challenges here.

The Department of Justice is conducting public consultations on the concept of parental alienation in family law. Among those who have expressed concern that conclusions of parental alienation are increasingly arrived at when the real issues may be domestic abuse and coercive control are Women's Aid and the Rape Crisis Network.

However, parental alienation has significant support among some experts who conduct S.47 assessments, whereas organisations such as the American Psychological Association refer to it as a "so-called syndrome".

Asked about the above case where the distraught child was taken from its mother's custody and placed with a convicted abuser, one family therapist said: "Children frequently want things that are not good for them in the long term. "It's not about dismissing the child's voice. The challenge is that we now can't be certain that what the child is saying is, one, what the child wants and two, what's actually in the best interests of the child."

I'm no expert of course, but I'd say that being dragged screaming from a court, to be handed over to a violent parent, is rarely in any child's best interests.

An updated sex education course is being prepared by the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment (NCCA), and submissions have been invited from parents, students and teachers to the consultation process.

Among the groups invited to take part in a "roundtable discussion" on the new course was Teni, the transgender equality network. This despite the fact that Teni recently had its funding suspended by the HSE for failing to produce complete financial accounts.

This is the fourth year in a row that Teni, which has received more than €1.3 million from the HSE since 2017, has missed the deadline for filing its annual accounts.

However, a nominated representative of the Catholic Secondary School Parents' Association tweeted last month that it had been excluded from the NCCA curriculum group advising on sexuality. The association is opposed to the gender ideology promoted by groups such as Teni, which insists that biological sex is irrelevant and that, for example, a man who believes he is a woman is as authentic a woman as any adult human female.

As there is no biological basis for this assertion, it is more akin to a religious creed than a scientific or factual reality: it exists entirely within the imagination of the trans person concerned. So why are the unscientific beliefs of one group given weight by the NCCA, while the beliefs, as well as the concerns, of some Catholic parents are summarily dismissed?

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CHILDREN ARE COLLATERAL DAMAGE IN THE CULTURE WAR

by Neil Davenport November 21st 2022

WHENEVER WOKENESS REARS ITS HEAD, CHILD PROTECTION GOES OUT OF THE WINDOW.

This is an online article from “Spiked” and refers to the situation in Scotland – social care workers here may find interesting comparisons. Please note the postscript to this article and fallout from it.

Nicola Sturgeon’s Gender Recognition Reform Bill is to be debated again by Holyrood this week. Last month, the bill provoked the largest backbench rebellion in the history of the SNP government. A key sticking point for critics is the bill’s plan to reduce the minimum age for changing gender from 18 to 16. SNP MSP Christine Grahame, who has proposed an amendment to the bill, correctly says that 16 is ‘*too young*’ for a child to make such a drastic decision. ‘*Some young people are in emotional turmoil and there needs to be additional precautions*’, she says.

Grahame’s amendment would extend the period in which 16- and 17-year-olds would have to live as their ‘*new*’ gender to receive a gender-recognition certificate, increasing it from three months to six. Other MSPs want further amendments to prevent a repeat of the Tavistock scandal south of the border, where children were hastily put on a pathway to irreversible gender transitions.

The SNP government’s blithe disregard for children is striking. Not least as, in the past, the SNP has tried to present itself as a zealous defender of child safeguarding. For instance, its wildly authoritarian Named Person scheme, had it ever been implemented, would have given every Scottish child a state-appointed guardian from birth.

It might therefore seem surprising that Sturgeon has not spotted the obvious dangers posed to children in her bill. In reality, though, this is not down to any lack of foresight. It is because victories in the culture war simply take priority over child safety. If Sturgeon and the SNP can appear to be more ‘*progressive*’ and ‘*inclusive*’ than the Tories in Westminster, then child-protection measures can take a hike.

For the SNP, a commitment to so-called trans rights puts it on the right side of history, whatever the consequences for children. After all, this is the same government that published guidance last year declaring that schoolchildren as young as four should be allowed to change their gender, choose their preferred pronouns and use the changing rooms of their chosen gender, without their parents’ knowledge or consent.

This is not just limited to the trans issue. The SNP has been wilfully neglectful of Scottish children whenever there have been political points to be scored. Take the Covid lockdowns. During the pandemic, Sturgeon’s Scotland was always far more restrictive than England. It closed schools sooner and kept them shut for longer. Meanwhile, the SNP failed to provide adequate online learning for cooped-up children, further damaging Scottish children’s education and social development. It also raced to cancel exams in 2021, a month before a decision was reached to cancel exams in England. This is because, by imposing more draconian restrictions, the SNP government could pose as more ‘*caring*’ than its counterpart in England. In the culture war, Covid restrictions were viewed as ‘*progressive*’. All that damage to children’s education and wellbeing did not matter when there was an opportunity for the SNP to show it cares more about the NHS than the Tories do.

While the SNP is a repeat offender when it comes to sacrificing children on the altar of ideology, there are plenty of other examples in the UK of child safety taking a back seat to political correctness. In recent decades, scores of towns in northern England – such as Rotherham, Halifax, Rochdale and Keighley – turned a blind eye as predominantly Muslim men abused mainly white working-class girls. In July, it was revealed that a staggering 1,000 girls were abused and raped by grooming gangs in Telford alone since 1980.

Countless inquiries and reports have identified the same lamentable moral failings on the part of local councils and police forces. The manner in which the police and the local authorities looked the other way, despite being inundated with complaints from vulnerable teenage girls, is now the stuff of infamy. Time

and again, the authorities were too scared to intervene for fear of being accused of racism or inflaming community tensions.

Our politically correct institutions essentially refused to confront rape and abuse that was happening in plain sight. These mainly white working-class girls were the ‘*wrong*’ kind of victims. And they were raped and abused by the ‘*wrong*’ kind of perpetrators (*primarily Pakistani-Muslim men*). The grooming-gangs scandal did not fit the multicultural script that likes to paint migrants and Muslims as victims of white racism. So much for the vision of the ‘*child-centred society*’ that apparently guides child-protection agencies. If you are the ‘*wrong*’ type of child, an inconvenient kid who gets in the way of the woke narrative, you can expect neither protection nor justice.

It was a similar story with the Manchester Arena attack back in May 2017, when the state proved unable to protect scores of young people from an Islamist terror attack. As the first report of the inquiry into the bombing made clear, multiple opportunities to prevent Salman Abedi’s atrocity were missed. Notably, security guards were reluctant to challenge the suspicious-looking man with a heavy rucksack for fear of being thought of as racist.

The irony here is that the language of children’s rights and child protection is everywhere now. Anyone who works with children is subjected to reams of safeguarding rules and duties. Yet it is clear that child protection ends where the culture war begins.

The fact is that basic child protection is a serious barrier to implementing the wishes of the trans movement. But, as with any case where wokeness rears its ugly head, children will be unseen and unheard. They are simply written off as collateral damage in the elite’s culture war.

Neil Davenport is a writer based in London. Article published with permission of “Spiked online.”

Postscript: just before Christmas, on December 22nd last, following one of the lengthiest debates in the Scottish Parliament’s history and amidst chaotic scenes, MSPs voted to approve a controversial bill which makes it easier for people to legally change their gender and to reduce the minimum age for changing gender from 18 to 16. Royal approval will be needed and there is a groundswell of opinion that Westminster may deploy the “*nuclear option*” of prohibiting the bill from going for royal assent.

PREPARATIONS FOR FULL COMMENCEMENT OF THE ASSISTED DECISION-MAKING (CAPACITY) ACT (2015)

Efforts are still underway to prepare for the commencement of the Assisted Decision (*Capacity*) Act 2015 (*the 2015 Act*). In early September Mr Roderick O’Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth (*DCEDIY*) announced that the 2015 Act would commence on the 21st November 2022.

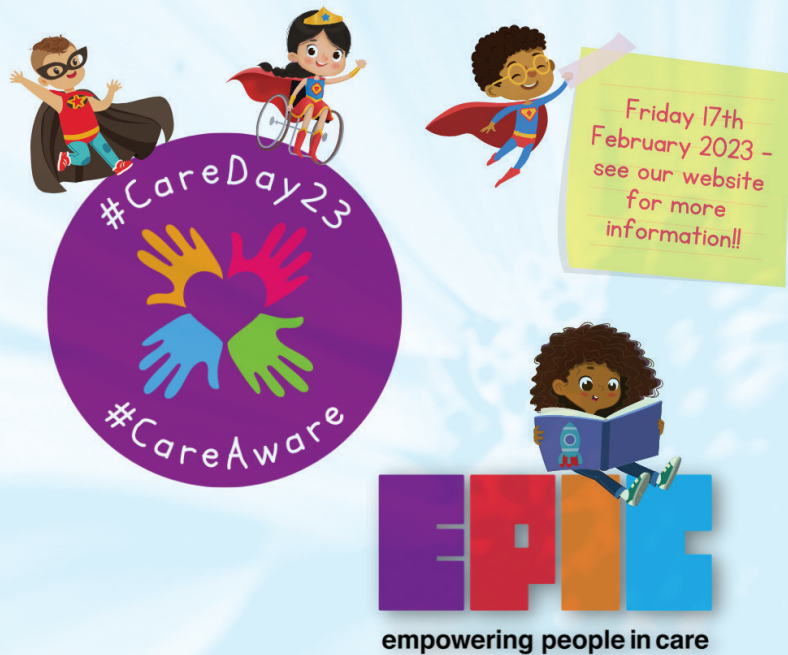
As the amending bill is still being debated in the Seanad, commencement will now not happen in 2022. It is expected that commencement will now happen in early 2023.

While we await full commencement there is time now to support staff to access the extensive learning supports that have been developed over the last 18 months. In this newsletter, Elaine McCaughley, our Senior Project Manager, outlines all of the resources that are available to support staff to prepare for programmes, explainer videos, frequently asked questions and written information about the 2015 Act. It is important that time is set aside to enable staff to access the learning supports that are available in advance of commencement. We welcome feedback and questions which might arise from watching or reading any of the learning resources.

SOCIAL CARE PODCAST

The Social Care Podcast is a weekly podcast for anyone working in the social care field or studying social care. It is hosted by two social care professionals who have over 40 years social care experience between them. The purpose of this podcast is to open up the conversation around the work of Social Care Workers to a wider audience and give an opportunity for social care workers to share their stories with others in the field. Tune in each week to hear Audrey and David, aka Baggie chat with those working in an array of social care services and projects and get insights into what it means to be a social care worker. The Social Care Podcast can be found on Spotify or apple iTunes. If you'd like to get in touch with the hosts to give feedback or become a guest, email us at thesocialcarepodcast@gmail.com

CARE DAY 2023



The next Care Day will be celebrated across the world on Friday 17th February 2023 and the theme, which was developed by children and young people from the EPIC Care Community and Youth Councils, is, 'Don't judge a book by its cover, embrace our stories instead!'

For #CareDay23, the EPIC Care Community and Youth Councils want to address the stigma children and young people can face while they are in care, and challenge negative stereotypes. They are inviting people to learn about children and young people in care and embrace their diverse stories of hope, courage, talent, and achievement. We want communities across Ireland to listen to children and young people themselves, to look beyond the surface, and to see that every care-experienced child and young person is an individual with their own unique story, ambitions, and dreams for the future. More information about Care Day 23 and some of the activities taking place can be found on EPIC's website at Care Day 23 | EPIC (www.epiconline.ie).

RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND PROFESSIONALISATION IN RESIDENTIAL CHILDCARE IN IRELAND

The following, by Dr Martin Power, a member of SCI's Workers' Advisory Group recently appeared in the Scottish Journal of Residential Childcare (volume 22, issue 2, p. 167-187)

It has been over twenty years since Williams and Lalor (2001) highlighted what they perceived as the main 'Obstacles to the professionalisation of residential childcare work', with the absence of a professional register viewed as a major obstacle, along with issues of pay and conditions, education and training, and a multiplicity of job titles. With the opening of a register and the beginning of regulation now on the near horizon, the regulation obstacle will soon be resigned to history it would seem. Moreover, progress has also been made with respect to some of the other obstacles, especially education and training. At the same time, significant challenges to recruitment and retention have arisen in recent years, suggesting that some obstacles are proving less amenable to change or removal. The current issue of the Scottish Journal of Residential Childcare ([link below](#)), in a paper titled 'Recruitment, retention and professionalisation in residential childcare in Ireland' by Dr Martin Power, University of Ireland, examines both the trajectory and current status of the obstacles Williams and Lalor (2001) identified, and explores the potential implications of registration. It also points to evidence that suggests that working in children's residential care may be becoming less attractive as a long-term career option.

Williams, D., & Lalor, K. (2001). Obstacles to the professionalisation of residential childcare work. Irish Journal of Applied Social Studies, 2(2), 73-90. Available at - <https://arrow.tudublin.ie/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1069&context=ijass>

Power, M. (2022). Recruitment, retention and professionalisation in residential childcare in Ireland. Scottish Journal of Residential Childcare, 22(2), 167-187. Available at -<https://celcis.org/knowledge-bank/search-bank/journal/scottish-journal-residential-child-care-vol-21-no-2>

MINISTER'S VIEW ON SOCIAL CARE & SOCIAL WORK GRADUATE CAMPAIGNS

Relevant to Martin Power's preceding article is the following... giving the Minister's answer to a parliamentary question.

Kathleen Funchion (Carlow-Kilkenny, Sinn Féin) recently asked Roderic O'Gorman, Minister for Children, Equality, Disability, Integration and Youth his views on Tusla's social care and social work graduate campaigns.

The following is the Minister's written reply.

I welcome all Tusla's HR initiatives designed to attract staff to work with the Agency. The need to increase the numbers employed in specific grades employed by Tusla is an ongoing concern for the Agency and my Department.

While my Department does not have a national remit with regard to education, policies, regulations or workforce planning governing social workers' and social care workers' employment in Ireland, it has actively engaged with Tusla and other stakeholders with regard to addressing issues relating to their supply, recruitment and retention.

In this context, Tusla commenced its annual high-profile Social Work graduate and targeted Social Care Worker graduate campaigns earlier this year. I understand Tusla committed to offering a position to every successful social work student who graduated this year and provided significant supports to graduates during their CORU registration process. I am also informed that planning and engagement with the higher education institutions for 2023 is at an advanced stage.

Additionally, I am aware that Tusla is piloting a Transition Year programme for the 22/23 academic year with a small number of schools across the country. One of the primary aims of this programme is to encourage students to consider a career with Tusla. This is an opportune time to promote Tusla as an

Employer of Choice with transition year students as they prepare to make crucial decisions regarding their future careers. I understand that the Tusla Transition Year programme includes information about some of the core front-line professions within the Agency - such as social care and social work- and information about how to pursue careers in these areas is provided.

I welcome and support Tusla's proactive approach with these initiatives that form part of Tusla's ongoing efforts to address current difficulties in recruitment and retention. These initiatives also complement Tusla's recently launched People Strategy 2022-2024 with its focus on improving the working experience and retention of all staff and creating a place that future staff will want to join to build their careers while supporting the mission of Tusla to develop and deliver great child focussed services.

FOUR IN FIVE OF THE CHILDREN'S HOMES IN ENGLAND ARE RUN FOR PROFIT ... HERE'S WHY THAT IS A PROBLEM

Reprinted from "The Conversation" UK Daily Newsletter

(Authors Anders Bach-Mortensen Postdoctoral Research Fellow in Social Policy, University of Oxford Benjamin Goodair Doctoral Scholar in Social Policy, University of Oxford Jane Barlow Professor of Evidence Based Intervention and Policy Evaluation, University of Oxford)

The John Lewis Christmas ad has been an annual, headline-grabbing event in the UK since the retailer first launched a seasonal TV campaign in 2007. To date it has variously featured a pet penguin, a talking dragon and a trampolining dog. Its 2022 iteration, however, has garnered serious attention for the spotlight it shines on children in care. The Beginner, as it is entitled, follows a middle-aged man who takes up skateboarding so that he can bond with the young girl he and his partner are about to foster. It has rightly been hailed as deeply moving. But, as journalist Danny Lavelle has pointed out: "*It's demoralising that one of the nation's largest retailers is doing the government's job for it.*"

The challenges facing children's social care in England are well documented. The number of looked-after children has, in fact, never been higher. The government's own statistics reported 80,850 children in care in 2021 – an increase of 25% since 2010. In addition, many councils are increasingly unable to cater to that need. They simply do not have the capacity to sort out local residential accommodation in line with the standards of care they are obliged to meet. The children's care sector is experiencing what the government's Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills (*Ofsted*) has termed a "*sufficiency crisis*".

Perhaps the most galling statistic, however, is the fact that around 80% – four in five – of all children's homes in England are now being delivered by for-profit companies. These providers are often free to select which children to accommodate, where to set up services and at what cost. This, in turn, significantly limits local authorities' capacity to shape the care that children receive. This issue has been fiercely debated, but there has been surprisingly little empirical investigation. To resolve this knowledge gap, we have examined how outsourcing care homes to private companies has affected service quality across England. We have found that – on average – for-profit children's homes receive worse Ofsted ratings and violate more statutory requirements than those run by charities and local councils. Outsourcing care provision is not working and the nation's most vulnerable children are paying the price.

Significant differences in quality

Our study is the first longitudinal analysis of the impact of outsourced children's homes and Ofsted inspections in England. We created and analysed a comprehensive dataset of more than 13,000 Ofsted inspections of children's homes in England over a seven-year period (2014–2021).

We found three things. First, for-profit children's homes, on average, receive worse Ofsted ratings than local authority homes across all inspection domains. These include the overall experiences and progress of children and young people, the effectiveness of leadership, and the support and protection afforded to young people and children. Second, for-profit children's homes violate more statutory requirements and

receive more recommendations to improve their services than their local authority counterparts. Third, local authority children's services which place a greater amount of their looked-after children with private companies receive worse Ofsted assessments than the local authorities who do not.

These findings beg the question as to why, when housing some of the most vulnerable children in society, the government would allow and even promote the for-profit provision of children's homes. Proponents of this model claim that outsourcing to the private sector cultivates competition and enables diverse providers to "innovate" in how they deliver services. They claim this addresses the "inefficiency" of public sector services. It reduces costs and improves service quality. Recent research from the What Works for Children's Social Care and the Institute for Government thinktanks disproves these claims. It shows that local authorities (*who commission these services*) lack the internal capacity and expertise needed to monitor and shape how social care is provided by private companies. Work by the Competition and Markets Authority (*the UK's competition regulator*) corroborates their assessment. Further, it is unclear why the UK government allows for-profit provision in some sectors but not in others. State-funded schools, for example, are not allowed to be operated as profit-making entities. Why then is it desirable for children in care to be accommodated by for-profit companies?

Care work cannot easily be quantified as a commercial service. Research in adult social care shows that it is inherently difficult to align the incentives that underpin commercial enterprises with the needs of social care users. The very nature of social care work makes it challenging to define "outcomes" in the way you might for other commercial services and, as a business, to organise your operations accordingly. This holds true too for children's care. "Child-centred outcomes" in this context relate to the stability, wellbeing and long-term improvement of vulnerable children's lives. However, there is no nationwide framework to shape how local authorities should achieve these outcomes. Instead, commissioning decisions tend to be driven by costs – often with little room for negotiation due to the sufficiency crisis. And because of this, outsourced social care provision is also hard to regulate. Local authorities – and even Ofsted – are severely limited in their ability to monitor the services these companies provide. As a result, the latter are free to let other priorities, such as maximising their profits, determine the quality of the care they provide.

Proponents of outsourcing care routinely dismiss these concerns. The Children's Home Association (*previously known as the Independent Children's Home Association*) recently claimed that "there is no significant degree of variance" in Ofsted ratings according to provider ownership. Similarly, even though the 2022 Competition and Markets Authority report identified a series of market failures, it nonetheless concluded that "the evidence from regulatory inspections gives us no reason to believe that private provision is of lower quality, on average, than local authority provision".

Our findings clearly show that Ofsted routinely criticises the care children receive in homes run for profit. This, of course, will come as no surprise to many commissioners, practitioners, social workers and other stakeholders who have long expressed their concerns. The rise of children in need of support in England is known to have been exacerbated by austerity measures. Although the chancellor of the exchequer, Jeremy Hunt, announced some investment in social care in his autumn statement, experts have been quick to point out that he also avoided any real reform. The worry is that the sufficiency crisis the care sector faces will only be intensified. The current operating model for children's social care is not delivering what its advocates promised. And the nation's most vulnerable children are paying the price.

STRETCH FURTHER: A REVIEW OF "HOLDING MOSES"

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?app=desktop&v=SdLLizKayK>

Holding Moses is a very short (16 minute long) documentary about dealing with the almost overwhelming challenge of caring for a profoundly "disabled" (*I'll use this word because the documentary does*) child. Its relevance to social care work is obvious: we are often caring for people who other people, including their own families, have found it impossible to continue looking after. Some of those people have challenging behaviour that kicks you in the guts (*sometimes not just metaphorically*) just when you have made yourself vulnerable.

This brief documentary is worth a watch because it reiterates a simple truth: don't expect the person you are caring for to change. It is you, as the person responsible for delivering care, who has to do the work, the changing. The other person changes only when you do. Social care work is tough. The work is often poorly rewarded and shift work is hard. Night duty plays havoc with your digestion and your complexion. You don't feel great. You're at the end of your tether, and yet you're constantly being challenged, challenged by a system that is unfair and unjust and under-resourced, and by the very people you are working with (*not to mention, almost inevitable politics within any organisation*).

There are some differences between working with people with profound challenges, and parenting them, but there are parallels, and it is these that are so illuminating in the documentary. There are also insights into the minds of parents of children they've been unable to care for. This mother says, "*I'm devastated that I have been given this child.*" She is scared because the child is almost impossible to love. He does not open his eyes.

Lisa Marie Presley lost her son to suicide two years before she herself died all too young at 54. She said that the grief of losing a child never goes away, never even lessens. Randi, the mother here, says that "*time handles the grief for you as you withstand it.*" Where there's life, there's hope.

As a carer, somehow, you have to accept that you have enough to give. You have to find out how you are going to tap into giving enough by understanding that what you have is enough. Being there is good. Being there and being engaged, being prepared to create a connection, and also allowing yourself to feel empowered by this, by what you do, this is what we have to do as carers. Accept what is enough. Like Winnicott said.

The extraordinary thing is, of course, that those who have had the least, or who have the greatest challenges, often express the most extraordinary level of commitment, and connection. This is the profoundly moving thing about the documentary. His mother recognises that Moses' hugs reach deep into the very essence of her being, and that this feels exceptional, because "*it comes from a child who appears to be missing so much*".

Randi is a dancer. Dancing, moving, sport and music are often means to create the most profound connections with people with special needs. Even though we are tired, even though we want to sit down and drink coffee and talk, getting up and moving is often a key to creating connection with people who are in care. The most important recognition is the one that echoes Gabor Mate. His mother says, "*he doesn't change. I am the one who has to change.*" TCI recognises this too. You change your stance. You change your attitude. You find a way to stretch yourself, to move into a different space, you explore, you change. Then the relationship changes. Watch it. Review by Dr Lucy Weir, former social care worker.

Review by Dr. Lucy Weir

At Long Last...

CORU has given a commitment that statutory registration will begin in November 2023. After years of waiting, this is one of the most significant developments for social care in Ireland. SCI and its previous constituent organisations has campaigned for this to become a reality for many, many years. Further information on this historic development will issue nearer that time.



Advocating for Social Care Workers, Educators and Managers in Ireland

Social Care Ireland,
C/O ChildVision,
Grace Park Road,
Drumcondra,
Dublin 9.

Ph: 087 746 3926
W: socialcareireland.ie

Social Care Ireland (SCI) is the Professional Representative Body for the Social Care Work Profession in the Republic of Ireland.

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, students.

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/webinars.
- Access to training grants from IASCM, maximum grant €300.
- Professional advice and support from Social Care Ireland office, board and CPD co-ordinator.
- Participation in special interest groups and committees.
- Access to garda vetting at a reduced cost through IASCM.
- Consultation and input into national standards, policy and legislation.
- Access to CURAM Magazine (online edition).
- 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.
- Job advertisements.
- 15% discount from Fermoy Print and Design for printing theses and reports etc.
- Access to www.childlink.ie, providing valuable resources and information for social care.
- Access to Cornmarket Group Financial Services – financial advice.

Future benefits will include:

- Optional 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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SCI

SOCIAL CARE IRELAND

New Membership Rates!

To support new membership and continued growth & development, the Board of SCI are pleased to announce the following membership fee structure effective from the 4th of August 2021. Which will apply to all new and existing members of Social Care Ireland.

Refer a friend and be in with a chance to win €250!

Details on how to enter on our webpage.

Once statutory registration begins, an additional optional fee structure will be offered to provide fitness to practise cover at an affordable and cost-effective rate.

ASSOCIATE MEMBERSHIP

€40.00

Open to allied professionals or individuals interested in social care.

FULL MEMBERSHIP

(with voting rights)

€50.00

Open to Social Care Workers, Managers and Team Leaders. We have a €5 monthly subscription.

STUDENT MEMBERSHIP

€30.00

Open to undergraduates working toward an approved social care qualification.

For Membership Benefits see overleaf

Join Social Care Ireland now

www.socialcareireland.ie

and help grow your profession.