

Social Care Ireland

# ANNUAL CONFERENCE BROCHURE 2024

**DIVERSITY**

**QUALITY**

**NO-LOSS**



**SCI**

SOCIAL CARE IRELAND



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The title of this year's conference is; **Beyond Registration: the challenges of equality, diversity and inclusion for social care workers and the communities they serve.** The long-awaited registration for social care workers opens in November 2023. This important juncture provides the opportunity to examine the broader context within which the profession operates, beyond registration. This year's theme seeks to address the very real challenges of growing inequality in Irish society and the crucial role played by social care workers in bringing about change. Central to this is the lived experience of marginalised and socially excluded groups in society. This conference aims to give a voice to such lived experiences and how these have brought about positive social change. We also recognise the challenges experienced by the social care workforce in an unequal society. To explore this year's theme we welcome papers/workshop proposals that address innovative practice and give a voice to the lived experience.

To select the category, you would like to attend from the timetable, follow these steps. Make your selection once you've decided on the category or session you'd like to attend, indicate your choice by signing up for the session. This is available to you each morning and/or afternoon.

- 1) Abstracts are invited to deliver an inter-active workshop that aims to build skills, knowledge, or values/attitudes on a specified theme. **There are 90 minutes allocated for each interactive workshop therefore the numbers are restricted.**
- 2) Policy and practice related topics such as specific issues, challenges or opportunities emerging for a sector relevant to service delivery, service user needs and/or professional practice. **Presenters should allow 35 -40 minutes for presentation, with 5 to 10 minutes for questions and answers.**
- 3) Research category invites submissions to present original and innovative research. **There are 30 minutes allocated for each presentation.** Presenters should allow 25 minutes for presentation and 5 minutes for questions and answers.

All sessions are the full 90 minutes and are broken up depending on the above categories.

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# Day 1 – Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> April 2024

8:30 am -  
9:45 am

**\*\*Registration and Workshop Selection.**

10:00 am -  
10:30 am

Conference Opening – CEO Tusla Kate Duggan

10:30 am -  
11:30 am

## Keynote One SURVIVING POVERTY

**Presenter:** Dr Katriona O Sullivan (60 minutes including Q&A)

**Brief overview:** Katriona's talk describes the far-reaching impact that childhood poverty had on her life. As one of 5 children in a home shaped by her parents' heroin addiction, Katriona's story chronicles her journey from poverty, teenage pregnancy, homelessness to graduating with a PhD from Trinity College Dublin and becoming an award-winning university lecturer. Katriona's talk will highlight the educational, social, community systems and supports which rose up to meet her when she looked to change her life.

**Biography:** Katriona is a psychologist and memoirist. And a Senior Lecturer in the Assisting Living & Learning Institute, Department of Psychology, Maynooth University. She is the Principal Investigator on the STEM Passport for Inclusion project, featured recently on RTE **Changemaker series**. She has held research grants from the Irish Research Council and Science Foundation Ireland leading an initiative to tackle digital inequality in education. She also successfully led the largest HEA PATH funded programme entitled Turn to Teaching which focused on diversifying teacher education. She has been invited speaker at the World Education Forum, the European Gender Action Workshop on Women and Digitalization and most recently at the UN gender equality workshop. She has worked with Irish policy makers to develop policies around education and inclusion. She has published research on equality, gender, education, inclusion and STEM. Her first book, **Poor**, debuted at #1 on the Irish Non-Fiction bestseller list. The book, a memoir of growing up in extreme poverty, describes the far-reaching impact of childhood poverty.

11:30 am -  
12:00 pm

**Refreshments and Comfort Break**

12:00 pm -  
13:30 pm

### 1. Workshop

‘Supporting those with lived experience through trauma informed embodied practices’

**Presenter:** Maura O Donoghue (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** In this interactive workshop we will focus on understanding the impact of trauma and adversity on the embodied experience, of both those with lived experience and the social care workers supporting them. Supporting ourselves and others to soothe and regulate the nervous system is a key skill for social care workers and offers us an opportunity to respond in a more compassionate way to both ourselves and those we support. Participants will be offered the opportunity learn several practical tools to support the development of a sense of embodied safety. These practices can be integrated into daily social care practice, shared with colleagues, and most importantly shared with those who have lived experienced of adversity and exclusion in order to allow them the opportunity to also experience the benefits. It is important as social care workers to have practices and tools that integrate easily into our roles and take into account the context of our work.

**Biography:** Maura is a social care worker and wellness practitioner combining both roles to provide a trauma informed therapeutic wellness service, Luam Wellness. Maura holds a BA in Applied Social Care and a MA in Social Research. She is a qualified body massage therapist, mindfulness practitioner and yoga teacher. Maura is passionate about offering inclusive wellness support to people who ordinarily experience barriers to accessing such services. She is a lecturer on the CPD Certificate in Trauma informed Care: Theory and Practice at the Centre for Adult Education in University College Cork

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## 2. Policy and Practice

### ‘Exploring Equality Diversity Inclusion (EDI) principles in relation to social care student supervision on placement through the lived experience of social care workers and students’

**Presenter:** Noelle Reilly & Christina Sieber (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** In recent years there has been an increased focus on student feedback following their placements. A theme which is emerging from both the debriefing sessions with students, and casual conversations with practice educators is a tentative acknowledgement of the challenges that some students (by virtue of belonging to a marginalised group identified through the lens of gender, race or sexual orientation) face on placement. Findings from a recent European Union survey exploring the experiences of people of African descent documented some of these challenges (EU, 2023)

**Action:** The proposed presentation/workshop is to create a space for social care workers/students and educators to consider how the principles of EDI can be embedded into student supervision on placement. Supervision on placement is a vital component of the learning experience and it is a place where students can learn from a theoretical and practical viewpoint. Through the mentoring relationship the topics of equality, diversity and inclusion can be reflected on and discussed.

**Biographies:** Noelle Reilly is the Professional Social Care Placement Coordinator with SETU Carlow. Noelle is a member of both the Irish Association of Social Care Educators and of Social Care Ireland. Noelle is also a member of the Social Care Workers Registration Board. Noelle is particularly interested in the impact of registration and regulation on social care placements from both the practice educators and students’ perspectives. Noelle is currently engaged in research to explore the experiences of practice educators with a view to developing enhanced training for practice educators working with SETU students.

Christina Sieber is the Professional Social Care Placement Coordinator with SETU Wexford. She is a member of the Irish Association of Social Care Educators and Social Care Ireland. Christina has over twenty years’ experience working in the social care sector, namely in the mainstream residential social care field, primarily with trauma-informed and attachment-based care. Her interests and research lie in attachment, trauma and reflective practice and the role that they play in both education, practice and placement.

### ‘Supporting black and brown female social care students on professional practice placement’

**Presenter:** Eileen Farrell, Maeve Doyle, Wioletta Jacob and two students (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Black and Brown females, particularly as mature students enter care roles, this includes social care within the Technical University sector. The aim of this project is to directly support and improve the experience of black and brown female student who are registered on the Level 7 and level 8 programmes in professional social care practice. Specifically, the project wishes to support their experiences on mandatory work placement and the modules that support this placement. The project which is currently ongoing seeks to acknowledge and recognise how the intersection of race and gender can impact on the educational and placement experience. In doing so the project intends to identify opportunities to build a more inclusive curriculum and a more targeted support structure within our degree programme and preparation for professional practice, and placement experience. It will also engage with and support our community partners (the practice placement tutors) in promoting a diverse and inclusive learning environment. Racism needs to be addressed within the context of social care education and professional practice placement.

**Biographies:** Eileen Farrell – Programme Director Level 8 Professional Practice in Social Care. Qualified as a Social Care Worker in 1998, BA Social Science (Sociology and Social Policy), MA Social Work, has been working in Social Care Education since 2004.

Dr Maeve Doyle is a lecturer of Psychology in SETU, teaching on the Professional Social Care Practice degree. She is the Athena Swan Project Manager for the Department of Humanities on the Carlow Campus where a bronze award was achieved in August 2022. She sits on SETU Academic Council, the SETU EDI committee and the SETU University of Sanctuary committee as well as being a member of All Ireland Student Mental Health Network and the Athena Swan practitioner network. She is also an Associate Fellow of the Higher Education Academy and has just completed the Aurora Advance HE Women in Leadership programme. She has run several EDI events, most recently the N-TUTORR funded event EDI at the Heart of Humanities in February 2024.

Wioletta Jacob- Placement Coordinator Intern on BA and BA (Hons) in Professional Social Care Practice. MA in Child Youth and Family Studies, BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Professional Social Care.

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### 3. Workshop

#### ‘Soothing the nervous system: Art and somatic exercises to counteract stress and adversity in the lives of social care workers’

**Presenters:** Jennifer McGarr and Marian Connell (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** As trauma-informed care has gained traction within social care work, workers have become more and more aware of the impact of their own lived experiences on their work with service users. Previous experiences of adversity can increase resilience and capacity for empathy and bring enhanced insights into one's practice (Newcombe 2016). However, the demands of working in social care settings can cause workers to become dysregulated or triggered by challenging situations within their work environment. Self-regulation is key to being a co-regulating presence.

Participants will engage in a somatic and expressive arts activity to gain strategies to calm their nervous system and visualise their safe place. The activity will commence with a short embodiment exercise whereby participants can connect to different autonomic states. Bringing awareness to our embodied experience is crucial to understanding how we are feeling and responding in the moment.

**Biographies:** Jennifer McGarr is a senior lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, Law and Education at TU Dublin, Tallaght Campus. She lectures on the Applied Social Care programme and supervises students on practice placement. Prior to working in education, Jennifer worked as a social care worker within a variety of social care settings. Jennifer's research interests include adversity and resilience within social care, migration and integration, personal and professional development of social care students.

Marian Connell is a lecturer in the School of Social Sciences, Law and Education at TU Dublin. She lectures on the Applied Social Care programme. Prior to working in Social Care Marian worked in Social Care as a Residential Social Care Worker, Director of Care, Family Worker and Manager of a Family Support Service. Marian also holds qualifications in Play Therapy, Child Art Psychotherapy and lectures in Trauma Informed Psychotherapy at post graduate level.

### 4. Policy and Practice

#### ‘Relational justice and relational pedagogy in social care education’

**Presenter:** Dr Niall Hanlon (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Given that social justice is now central to Social Care Work it is vital that educators develop critical perspectives, research and educational pedagogies that advance the principles, policies, and practices of social justice in the profession. This presentation outlines a critical perspective on social care that integrates four interrelating social justice principles: redistribution, recognition, representation, and relational justice. It argues that the principle of relational justice should be central to social care work and education.

**Biography:** Niall Hanlon is lecturer at the Technological University of Dublin. Niall has a PhD in Equality Studies (UCD) and his core academic interest is the theoretical analysis of caring practices, emotional relations and affective inequality. Niall has a practice background in social care work and social care research. He currently teaches modules on social theory, social justice and equality as well coordinating applied modules including community engaged learning and professional practice tutoring in social care. Niall is currently supervising PhD studies about masculinities and affective equality and is Chair of the MA Child, Family and Community Studies. Niall has published widely on affective equality, care theory and practice, and masculinities and caring, in national and international journals. He is author of *Masculinities, Care and Equality; identity and nurture in men's lives* (Palgrave, 2012).

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## ‘Embodying a trauma-informed universal design for learning in social care pedagogy’

**Presenter:** Dr Catherine Ann O’ Connell, Emma Aherne, Sinead O’ Callaghan, Aine McCarthy, Phillippa Meagher and Teresa Carney (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The aim of the workshop takes this embodied learning and care for the student to a deeper level in considering a unique Trauma-Informed UDL approach in the education of Social Care Workers. We believe that while we are teaching about trauma-informed care for clients in Social Care, we also have a responsibility to model trauma-informed care principles for our students. Even for students who have no past experience of trauma, this way of teaching will model core Social Care skills and build personal awareness and resilience. In essence, this can prepare and buffer students for the risk of vicarious traumatization in the work moving forward.

**Biographies:** Catherine-Ann has been teaching in higher education for the past 23 years. She has taught across a range of undergraduate programmes in TUS; Community Development and Addiction studies; Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC) and the Social Care programme. She was formerly the programme chair for ECEC and the Adlerian Psychology programmes in TUS, Thurles campus.

Through her outreach and development work she developed an innovative access programme, Time to Change, to support adults to return to education. Subsequently, over 700 people completed this programme between 2010 and 2015. She has qualifications in Mindfulness, Stress Management and Life & Business Coaching as well as a PG Certification in Innovation in Education (UCD).

Emma Aherne initially graduated as a Social Care Worker in 2007, moving on to complete a Masters in Social Work. Her main area of practice since 2006 has been in Domestic Abuse where she worked as a Social Worker in ADAPT Domestic Abuse Services until 2018. Emma is currently working as a Social Care Educator in the TUS BA in Social Care Work and is based in the Thurles Campus. She is passionate about the area of personal development and teaches across all years of the programme. Emma has also worked during the past number of years as a long-arm supervisor for Social Work students in UCC and is currently working with ASCEND in Tipperary facilitating support groups for women who have experienced domestic abuse.

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## 5. Research

### ‘Co-production in action: How HIQA and Tusla co-produced a toolkit to support and enhance effective communication between children, families and foster carers and Tusla staff’

**Presenter:** Sarah Fitzgerald & Maria MacInnes (30 Minutes)

**Brief overview:** HIQA has developed Draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services which aim to drive improvements in the quality and safety of care for all children. Throughout their development, HIQA engaged with children, young people, families, foster carers, advocates, staff and policy-makers, to understand barriers and facilitators to implementing the standards in practice. One significant area identified was that children, young people, families and foster carers felt supported and heard when communication went well between them and Tusla staff. However, it was identified that at times, a lack of effective communication existed between these groups. This often led to confusion for children, families and foster carers, delays in accessing care and support and a lack of trusting relationships between these groups. To address this, HIQA and Tusla agreed to co-produce tools to support and enhance communication across Tusla’s response pathway. To ensure the tools would be adopted by staff, a collaborative approach was taken.

**Biography:** Sarah Fitzgerald joined HIQA in 2019 and is a Project Lead for Health and Social Care Standards. Sarah previously worked as a post-doctoral researcher in the School of Public Health in University College Cork. She completed her PhD in 2016 as part of the SPHeRE programme. Since joining HIQA, she has been involved in the development of the Guidance on a Human Rights-based Approach in Health and Social Care Services, the draft Overarching Standards for the Care and Support of Children using Health and Social Care Services and the draft National Standards for Children’s Social Services. Sarah has a keen interest in ensuring that standards support practice that improves the lives of people that are using services.

Maria MacInnes Maria has worked in child protection and welfare services for 34 years. She began her career as a front-line social worker, then progressed to become a team leader in the UK and then Area Manager in Donegal from 2002 to 2017. Maria is now working as a Service Improvement Manager in the Office of the Chief Social Worker supporting learning in practice and still passionate about building working relationships for better outcomes for children and young people.

### ‘Throwing out the rulebook’ sharing research learning from co-creating and co-producing research with those with lived/living or learned experiences of substance use and/or mental health challenges’

**Presenter:** Susan Barnes (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Co-research an evaluation study to assess and measure the use and value of a co-produced online recovery support group for those with lived experiences of mental health and/or addiction.

This mixed method study analysed qualitative and quantitative data collected from 50 online surveys from Better Together participants, facilitators, referrers, and stakeholders and one online focus group for BT participants. The study used thematic coding based on co-production principles - assets based approach, capabilities, reciprocity and mutuality, peer support networks, blurring distinctions and facilitating rather than delivering (Rose and Kalathil, 2019). Participants were chosen through a selective sampling process.

**Biography:** Susan Barnes is a full-time lecturer and Course Director of the BA (Hons) in Applied Social Studies in Professional Social Care in the SETU Wexford. Her primary degree is in Applied Social Studies, WIT and completed an MA in Management in Education WIT. Susan worked in the HSE Addiction services for 15 years and her industry expertise lies in community and statutory addiction services; education and training, policy and strategic development, community responses, managing rehabilitation and harm reduction services. This is the first co-produced research that Susan has led with addiction professionals and those with lived experience of mental health and/or addiction challenges. Susan will co-present this presentation with one member of the Better Together Research Advisory Team

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## ‘Our lives, our voices, our future; Insights into the mental health experiences of traveller men and its implications for social care practice’

**Presenter:** David Friel (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The title of this presentation encapsulates its focus and substance. Irish Travellers are Ireland's only indigenous ethnic minority who have been part of Irish society for centuries. This presentation is based on a piece of participatory qualitative research entitled 'Our Lives, Our Voices, Our Future' which provided significant insights into Traveller men's lives, health and key determinants of their mental health. Facilitated by an Irish Traveller who is an academic, educator and practitioner in social care, this session promises a nuanced and informed perspective.

The research reveals that a complex interplay of social and structural factors profoundly impacts the mental health of Traveller men. Issues such as accommodation, homelessness, negative educational experiences, unemployment, poverty and poor physical health have been identified as key contributors that exacerbate mental health challenges.

**Biography:** David Friel is an Irish Traveller, PhD Candidate and Lecturer at the Atlantic Technological University in the Department of Early Years and Social Studies. David served as an Academic Tutor at ATU Sligo and was a Training and Development Officer with the Think Equality Project Donegal. He then took up the position of Adjunct Lecturer at University College Dublin. With extensive experience as a Social Care Practitioner, David worked in children's residential care. He is also an experienced facilitator and trainer in areas such as Public Sector Duty, Interculturalism and Anti-Racism Practice in Social Care. As a researcher, David collaborated on tenders with organisations like the Donegal Travellers Project and The Open Doors Initiative. Most recently, he has authored a chapter entitled 'Traveller Inclusive Practice in Social Care' in *Social Care Work: An Introduction for Students in Ireland*.

## 6. Research (post-grad):

### ‘How social care workers talk about professionalisation and how this will impact beyond registration’

**Presenter:** Fiona Walshe (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Professional status and professionalisation of social care has been an ongoing and contested journey. Full implementation of the Health and Social Care Professionals Act is providing a legislative base to the occupation for the first time. The regulation body CORU opened its social care worker register in November 2023. This is an ideal juncture, therefore, to investigate the discourses that are being used currently about the social care profession, professionalism and professionalisation.

A critical discursive psychological approach is being used in this study to look at the influence of social care workers' talk. According to Van Dijk (2015) discourses are influential. Wetherell (1998) proposed a synthesised approach to the analysis of how people talk about, and position themselves, in relation to an issue. It is important to reflect on how social care workers talk about themselves, their profession and professionalisation to understand their social reality and how it is constructed particularly now as they apply for registration. Six focus groups were used and participants worked in residential care, disability day and residential services, family support and one group were made up of a number of Tusla managers.

**Biography:** Fiona Walshe graduated with a social care degree from AIT in 2001 and has experience in residential care, disability, and advocacy work. Fiona is currently lecturing on the social care programmes in TUS Midlands and is the programme director for the Part Time Social Care programme. She is pursuing a PhD in professionalisation of the social care sector and has previously completed a Master's by research on professionalisation of social care workers. She has a keen interest in social care education, regulation and professions.

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## ‘Continuing professional development in times of transition; effective supervision in social care competencies & CORU’

**Presenter:** Michelle Coe (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Following decades of legislation and policy being implemented, Social Care in Ireland is on the verge of becoming professionalised, aiming to change the landscape for Social Care Workers, educators, and ultimately, service users. Being led by Ireland’s Health and Social Care multi-professional regulator, CORU, Standards of Proficiency for Social Care students aim to ensure emerging practitioners are competently prepared for practice. This follows an approved academic and practical education, supported by academic supervisors and practice educators, implementing a tripartite approach to this model. As registration for Social Care practitioners is set to open imminently, the preparedness of the Social Care community for what this means and how it will influence practice is explored, examining the concept of supervision, and how it is utilised in both education and practice. The use of Continuous Professional Development (CPD), and the role this will play in the professionalisation process is also explored in this context, and in relation to the Standards of Proficiency practitioners will be guided by once registered.

**Biography:** Michelle Coe is a Social Care practitioner and educator with almost 30 years experience at all levels of practice, and has recently completed a Masters by Research with TUS Midwest relating to the professionalisation of Social Care.

## ‘Unpacking the psychosocial tensions in cross-racial doctoral supervision; A co-constructed autoethnographic exploration’

**Presenters:** Dr Amina Adan and Dr Nicola O’Sullivan (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** In this Co-Constructed Autoethnographic piece of research we consider the perspective of a Black female academic and a white female academic, our experiences of providing cross-race doctoral supervision. The role of doctoral supervision, historically steered by white academics within a society where Whiteness commands formidable influence, often furnishes white supervisors with the privilege of sidestepping discussions related to race. This evasion, in part, stems from the presumption that such concerns are the exclusive purview of their Black colleagues. We contend that nurturing an awareness of the myriad realities inherent in this educational space is an essential prerequisite for effective cross-race supervision.

We opted for a co-constructed autoethnography (CAS) approach as our chosen method as it is well-suited for unearthing qualitative insights with contextual richness, attained through deep and reflective written exploration. This introspective process aims to foster a deeper comprehension of the self within the context of one’s environment, ultimately culminating in the generation of empirical evidence for broader generalisation. This collaborative effort between the authors, involved an iterative and reflective process of self-narration and analysis. Data collection was conducted by using personal memories obtained through self-reflection to recall meaningful events or moments from the supervisory experience (Chang, 2008). This method centred on the exchange of our personal narratives and experiences within the context of cross-race doctoral supervision. We initiated the process by collecting individual narratives, which we referred to as ‘raced moments’ during doctoral supervision. These narratives were concise vignettes that described significant instances and events during supervision which were poignant in terms of race dynamics. Each vignette underscored our individual responses and perspectives on these ‘magnified moments’, (Hochschild, 2003:16) offering valuable insights into the formation and management of our self-identity, with a specific focus on the anxieties and defences they provoke.

**Biographies:** Dr Amina Adan is a Doctoral Supervisor and Associate Lecturer at the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation Trust on the Professional Doctorate in Social Care and Social Work. Amina has a special interest in race, diversity and inclusion. She is especially interested in cross-race doctoral supervision.

Dr Nicola O’Sullivan is an independent social care consultant, group and individual Clinical supervisor, visiting lecturer and doctoral supervisor at the Tavistock and Portman NHS foundation Trust, VL at Trinity College Dublin and MTU. She works with social care and social work teams in Ireland and the UK, providing reflective practice spaces. Nicola also works with the SATU team in Ireland and works with a small number of foster families.

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## 7. Workshop

*‘DDP - not a parcel company - a way to deliver the relational security and connection that heals attachment rupture and early complex trauma’*

**Presenters:** Sez Morse & Edwina Grant (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** DDP stands for Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy. In an attachment-focused model we think about the adult’s history before or at least alongside the child/ young person’s and how important it is the adults are supported to make sense of their own early life, how they were parented/ cared for and where they may get stuck / activated / lost / demotivated in caring for / teaching / guiding the young person .

The ongoing demands of working with traumatised people, to be authentic and empathetic for any length of time, and to hold onto our ‘Strong backs and soft fronts’ (Joan Halifax, Buddhist quote) requires a need for us to know ourselves in a way we may have never had to before. To explore our core beliefs / internal working models, sweep into those dark corners of our minds that can hold a lifetime of joy, hurt, abandonment, love, loss, small injustices etc that can stack up to deeply held prejudices, resentments, resistance and ruptures within our muscles and minds.

**Biographies:** Sez is a Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist and DDP Practitioner, Consultant and Trainer. Sez now works as an independent integrative child and adolescent psychotherapist offering DDP therapy, supervision, consultation, and training. She works with adoptive families, children in residential and foster care and their foster families/keyworkers and birth families. She also provides supervision and consultation to CAMHS teams, Edge of Care teams, other professionals using DDP and those who are hoping to become certified. Sez was a founding director of DDP Connects UK CIC and she sits on several DDP committees. Sez is passionate about working with youth homelessness and with refugees in her local community. She has been a respite foster carer as well as a birth parent and now enjoys being a (very young) grandparent. Sez lives on the south coast of England with her partner and two sausage dogs and believes she may be part mermaid-part walrus as she likes to swim and bask on rocks in the sun and can’t be far from the sea for long or her fins dry out.

Edwina Grant is an independent chartered Educational Psychologist and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) practitioner, consultant, and trainer. She has over thirty years’ experience of working with children and families in a range of contexts from residential care to family therapy. Most of her work is with looked after and accommodated children, foster and adoptive families. Edwina’s professional passion is attachment theory into practice, recognising the crucial importance for all children of secure healthy family relationships and the need to support parenting figures to achieve this. As well as her therapeutic work with families Edwina provides training and consultancy in attachment and trauma-informed practice for organisations – social work, health and education. She is an Honorary Associate of DDP Connects UK Board of Directors and a founder member of Scottish Attachment in Action.

**Lunch**

13:30 pm -  
14:30 pm

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## ‘Beyond registration, an update on continuous professional development from Social Care Ireland’

**Presenter:** Charlotte Burke (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The implementation of the grandparenting rule for the registration of practitioners in social care marks a significant shift in the landscape for social care workers. This rule, which commenced on November 30<sup>th</sup>, 2023, signifies the beginning of long-awaited professional recognition within the field.

With the grandparenting rule in effect, existing practitioners now can formalise their status and receive recognition for their expertise and experience. This recognition not only validates the skills and knowledge they bring to their roles but also enhances their professional standing within the social care sector.

For social care workers, this development represents an important milestone in their careers. It offers them the chance to be officially recognised as professionals within their field, which can lead to various benefits such as increased opportunities for career advancement, greater respect from peers and employers, and potentially higher levels of job satisfaction.

Moreover, the commencement of professional recognition through the grandparenting rule is likely to have broader implications for the social care sector as a whole. It may contribute to raising the overall standards of practice, promoting professionalism and accountability, and ultimately improving the quality of care provided to vulnerable individuals and communities.

Overall, the commencement of the grandparenting rule for the registration of existing practitioners in social care signals a positive step forward in recognising and valuing the contributions of social care workers, while also striving for higher standards and better outcomes within the sector.

**Biography:** Charlotte Burke is the CPD Coordinator of Social Care Ireland (SCI) and has been in post since August 2017. The board is supported by Charlotte, who takes care of the day-to-day management of SCI. Her role also entails organising CPD events, conferences and ensuring the professional development of social care workers.

Before this Charlotte worked in the disability sector, adult services as a social care worker and leader for nearly twenty years.

Charlotte has a degree (Hons) in Social Care and a Masters in Child, Family and Community Studies from TU Dublin Grange Gorman.

Charlotte is currently completing a PhD with South East Technological University Carlow campus, her area of interest is the education of ‘residential childcare workers’ and ‘social care workers’ and exploring this historical journey and professional development. Charlotte is a registered social care worker.

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15:15 pm -  
16:15 pm

## Keynote two 'RESILIENCE AND WELLBEING'

**Presenter:** Shane Casey

**Biography:** Shane Casey is an Irish actor and playwright. He is best known for playing the role of Billy Murphy in The Young Offenders (film) and TV programme. Shane facilitates workshops centred on real life experiences he faced as a teen. How building resilience makes you a better communicator and supports your wellbeing

16:15 pm -  
17:00 pm

**Open Table and Conference Close**

19:30 pm -  
20:00 pm

**Drinks Reception**

20:15 pm -  
22:30 pm

**\*\*\*Gala Dinner and Awards Ceremony.**

*Congratulations to Aine Hatzer who won the student award, Aine is a student at Atlantic Technological University Donegal and was nominated by Dr Gráinne Ketelaar.*

Aine collaboratively developed a 'Student Guide' for first year students, providing information about all the resources and supports in ATU Donegal, complete with QR code for easy scanning which brings students to the 'How to @ ATU' section of the Student Toolkit. This innovation was the first time student input was included in the official college toolkit.

Aine collaborated with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Project Officer of ATU Donegal, Sharon Ferguson, to further develop this into a template that will be included in the HEA Healthy Campus initiative at national level so that it can be adapted and tailored for use as appropriate on every college campus across the country. Aine has also been working with the Mental Health & Wellbeing Officer on an EU Green Work Package 8, and participated in a 2-day conference where Students Union's, national and international, are working towards making college campuses more sustainable.

Aine has undertaken some voluntary work with a group of young people involved in an Aftercare program, via a Family Resource Centre in her home town, through which she has been helping young people navigate their financial assessments for SUSI grants, and addressing a range of personal care and sexual health information needs; as well as championing the sharing of information about CORU and the professional registration of Social Care Workers. Aine is also seeking nomination as a Welfare & Equality Officer with the Student's Union in ATU for the next academic year.

*Congratulations to Keith Beattie who won the Outstanding Achievement Award he was nominated by Debbie Vaughan, Fiona Hennessy, and Clodagh McCabe. All centre managers from Pathways Ireland.*

Keith was heavily involved in the development of the HSE policies and procedures for CRCs in DNE back in 2009 and this policy document is used as a guideline for many services and set out a roadmap for practice in children's residential care. These policies are now seen as a foundation that has allowed practice to develop over time. This document supported professional practice within residential childcare in a way that was easy to understand and implement.

Keith in his role as monitor, inspector and more recently as Deputy Service Director and Development Manager has always challenged the status quo by using 'outside of the box thinking' if it is in the best interest of the young people. Those of us who knew Keith as a monitor would agree that Keith always challenged practice to improve services for young people. Keith was a great teacher and would support those in the residential care sector through engaging thought-provoking conversations to improve practice within centres for young people. In recent years, Keith has focused on reducing systems so that social care workers have more time to spend working relationally with young people. Keith has arranged meeting with EPIC to try to further this and has developed working groups in our service focused on reducing the number of records maintained on young people in care which, Keith also views this as a rights issue in terms of young people's privacy rights. Keith has recently retired and is a loss to the children's residential sector as a whole and we would love to see his many contributions recognised.

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## Day 2 – Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> April 2024

9:30 am -  
10:00 am

**\*\*Registration and Workshop Selection**

10:00 am -  
10:15 am

**Conference opening**

10:15 am -  
11:15 am

### **Keynote Three** WHAT IS HAPPENING WHEN WE SIT AROUND THE FIRE TELLING STORIES? HOW WORKING TOGETHER TO DEVELOP COHERENT NARRATIVES CAN OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS, CULTIVATE MUTUALITY AND BOTH CONNECT AND PROTECT US THROUGH INTERSECTIONALITY'

**Presenters:** Sez Morse & Edwina Grant (60 minutes including Q&A)

**Brief overview:** By sharing stories we can go there, into our dark shadowy unknown, dissociated, shameful or feared places in much less threatening or overwhelming ways - by sharing a universal story that each of us can relate to via the lens through which we see life and others, by telling our own stories and in doing so, each time revisiting and making sense of them anew in relationship with our companions. Once we start to do this and attend to what emerges, we can listen to, accept and be curious and empathic about our young people's experiences and get alongside them to co-create new meanings and new narratives that serve them better.

Working with the whole body is implicit in this approach and that is why I ask what is happening when we share stories? to help folks think about their somatic experiences too, to bring in the affective as much as the reflective when we are thinking about difference and inclusion. In my experience, we are in best service to others if we understand our own somatic and psychological responses.

**Biography:** Sez is a Child & Adolescent Psychotherapist and DDP Practitioner, Consultant and Trainer. Sez now works as an independent integrative child and adolescent psychotherapist offering DDP therapy, supervision, consultation, and training. She works with adoptive families, children in residential and foster care and their foster families/keyworkers and birth families. She also provides supervision and consultation to CAMHS teams, Edge of Care teams, other professionals using DDP and those who are hoping to become certified. Sez was a founding director of DDP Connects UK CIC and she sits on several DDPI committees. Sez is passionate about working with youth homelessness and with refugees in her local community. She has been a respite foster carer as well as a birth parent and now enjoys being a (very young) grandparent. Sez lives on the south coast of England with her partner and two sausage dogs and believes she may be part mermaid-part walrus as she likes to swim and bask on rocks in the sun and can't be far from the sea for long or her fins dry out.

Edwina Grant is an independent chartered Educational Psychologist and Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP) practitioner, consultant, and trainer. She has over thirty years' experience of working with children and families in a range of contexts from residential care to family therapy. Most of her work is with looked after and accommodated children, foster and adoptive families. Edwina's professional passion is attachment theory into practice, recognising the crucial importance for all children of secure healthy family relationships and the need to support parenting figures to achieve this. As well as her therapeutic work with families Edwina provides training and consultancy in attachment and trauma-informed practice for organisations - social work, health and education. She is an Honorary Associate of DDP Connects UK Board of Directors and a founder member of Scottish Attachment in Action.

11:15 am -  
11:45 am

**Refreshments and Comfort Break**

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## 8. Workshop

### ‘What does Fitness to Practice involve for social care workers’

**Presenter:** Anthony Kennelly (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** This workshop will explore the implementation of the regulatory process by CORU of social care workers and how Fitness to Practice is framed under CORU. Anthony will discuss the Code of Professional Conduct and Ethics for Social Care Workers and how having a clear scope of practice is important. He will use Irish case studies during the workshop.

**Biography:** Anthony is a Legal Programme Developer and Trainer with La Touche Training. He has experience in providing training to professional regulators in the running of legally and procedurally sound fitness to practise inquiries, including training in investigation skills, chairing skills, conduct of inquiries and hearings, due process requirements, unconscious bias awareness, deliberations, weighing of evidence and application of sanctions. Anthony has further experience in providing training to professionals in how best to handle complaints and disciplinary processes with their statutory regulator, in addition to designing and running courses in courtroom skills, expert witness skills and investigation skills. Anthony is also a law lecturer at University College Dublin, with a particular focus on constitutional law, fair procedures, and the rule of law.

Prior to working with La Touche Training, Anthony worked as a solicitor in leading Irish law firms, and as an in-house legal advisor in the Irish public sector.

## 9. Workshop

### ‘Supporting decision-making in residential care with people intellectual disabilities. Making space and time for supported decision-making and recording decision-making supports at home and for external purposes’

**Presenter:** Moira Jenkins, Aoife Johnson, Fawziya Cali, Musa Dube and Sandra Conroy (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** At the end of the workshop participants will have considered the opportunities for decision-making by adults with intellectual disabilities (PwIDs) in residential care and the role of the social care worker as decision-making supporter. Practice focussed with a HRBA (Domain 5.3 PANEL) the purpose is to share ideas on where decision-making can be exercised, how decision-making can be supported by SCWs and how that support can be integrated into internal systems together with how best to evidence decision-making supports and competency internally and for external agencies.

The workshop will encompass several legal rights of the supported person and duties of the social care workers.

**Biographies:** Moira Jenkins is an academic lawyer and has lectured in social care law at Munster Technological University (formerly Cork Institute of Technology) since 2004. She has practised as a solicitor and barrister in Australia and in community-based advice work in England. She has been involved in research on legal capacity reform at the Centre for Disability Law and Policy in Galway and has presented at Social Care Ireland conferences and workshops on the new decision-making ecology in the era of human-rights based social care practice.

Fawziya Cali is a graduate of MTU and holds a BA (Level 7) in Social Care Work. She has extensive experience as a residential social care worker. Currently studying for her honours social care work degree her dissertation topic is entitled ‘Residential Social Care Workers Supporting Decision-Making by Persons with Intellectual Disabilities: a qualitative study.’

Dr Aoife Johnson is a former Social Care Worker and fulltime lecturer at Munster Technological University Cork. She has a keen interest in promoting the rights of people with disabilities, especially older people living in residential care.

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## 10. Policy/Practice

### ‘Amplifying the voices of Black Minority Ethnic social care students- key lessons for policy and practice’

**Presenters:** Dr. Margaret Fingleton (45 minutes)

**Biography:** Dr. Margaret Fingleton is a lecturer and tutor in the School of Social Sciences, Law and Education in TU Dublin, City Campus. Margaret has worked as a social care worker and leader in residential and community care settings for over 25 years and used animal-assisted therapy and forest school education in her practice. Her recent PhD research focused on the experiences of Black Minority Ethnic social care students in Ireland and she has also been instrumental in developing a Framework for social care practice in Ireland.

### ‘Motivators to sustain longevity and fulfilment in social care settings’

**Presenters:** Passerose Mantoy and Sarah McGillivray (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Chrysalis CDP was established in 1998 as a community-based response to the heroin epidemic of that time. Prior to the 1990s, addiction treatment services were based on the 12 steps programme and delivered mostly on a medical treatment model. From the 1990s this approach changed and gradually moved from a medical model to a harm reduction model, and nowadays to a public health model. The introduction of the ‘project worker’ was central to this changing strategy.

Throughout this process the project worker was expected to be ‘a jack of all trades.’ They were asked to take on numerous roles and they readily adapted to different settings; they were outreach workers, keyworkers, case managers, addiction practitioners, well-being case managers; it depended on the needs arising in organisations and service providers. Project workers were not required to have a specific qualification, aside from a level 7, or preferably a degree in addiction or a related social science or social care qualification. Project workers were a great ‘commodity’ and a wonderful asset for services, and they were expected to respond to a diverse range of issues presented by service users.

**Biography:** Sarah McGillivray – graduate of ITB 2018 Social Care. Since gone on to work in the homeless sector for 2 years, then moved to detox and treatment unit for a further 5 years. Currently working with Chrysalis 4 years as a Team Leader particular interest include Dual Diagnosis for people in addiction and clinical supervision. Recently completed integrative dip in integrative supervision and a member of SCI for the last 2 years.

Passerose Mantoy is an accredited and qualified addiction therapist and accredited clinical supervisor. 25 years working in addiction services. 10 years as addiction practitioner/counsellor. 15 years as CEO of Chrysalis CDP.

## 11. Research (post-graduate)

### ‘Our Duty of Care’: Social care workers’ lived experiences of the challenging intersection between relational work and the Irish mandatory reporting system’

**Presenter:** Lena McCarthy (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Under the Children First Act (2015), social care workers in Ireland are mandated to report child protection and welfare concerns to Tusla – The Child and Family Agency. Social care workers have unique lived experiences as mandated persons who work with a broad spectrum of client populations. At present, no peer-reviewed research is available on social care workers’ lived experiences of implementing mandatory reporting in Ireland. This research aimed to explore social care workers’ lived experiences of managing relationship-based work in the context of the Irish mandatory reporting system. Social care workers’ experiences of engagement with Tusla, the impact of mandatory reporting on the practitioner, and the client-practitioner relationship were examined. Social care workers’ perceptions of what might improve the mandatory reporting system for social care practice were also ascertained. This abstract is based off a larger mixed methods research project conducted as part of a Master’s dissertation. The qualitative research design will be presented here.

**Biography:** Lena McCarthy is a recent graduate of the Master’s in applied psychology (Mental Health) in University College Cork. Lena has worked as a social care practitioner with complex family systems engaged with child protection services. She has a keen interest in the psychological processes involved in social care practice. Inspired by her experiences as a social care worker, Lena designed a research project that explored social care workers’ experiences of the complex intersection between relational social care practice and child protection policy.

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## ‘Masculinities and affective equality practices in professional social care in Ireland’

**Presenter:** Francis Gahan (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Despite an ever-increasing effort to address gender inequality in the labour market, there continues to be a disproportionate representation of men in non-traditional work including that of professional social care. The rationale for this research was situated in a response to the issue of gender inequality in a broad sense, but specifically to address gender-based affective inequalities in the context of social care work in Ireland. A qualitative methodology was employed. Initially, a discursive analysis of guiding social care policy and legislation was carried out to identify the position of gender in policy and legislative frameworks for practice. An equal representation of male and female social care workers were then interviewed. Qualitative interviews were central to identifying the perception of social care workers of gender and how such perceptions influenced the negotiation of social care work. The study placed a particular emphasis on participants engagement with emotional labour practices. Despite little evidence of ‘gendering’ within legislative and policy frameworks for practice, the qualitative accounts of participants revealed considerable variation across a variety of social care services with regards to gendered practices. The study revealed that social care work was often negotiated due to individual perceptions of gender. However, there were numerous other factors at play including the influence of managerial approaches to gendered work, cultural influences, the consideration of the wishes of service users and stereotypes associated with masculinity and men. These could be seen to influence some participants engagement in the feminine aspects of social care work and their engagement with emotional labour. Thus, there was evidence of both intrinsic and extrinsic gendered influences on social care work practices

**Biography:** Francis Gahan currently lectures at South East Technological University (Carlow Campus) within the Department of Humanities and is part of the practice education team on the professional social care. He is a qualified social care worker in the final stages of a PhD being supervised by Dr. Niall Hanlon of Technological University of Dublin. His PhD research centres on affective equality practices in social care and how emotional labour is negotiated in such work. He has direct experience of social care work, coordination and management in residential childcare and disability services.

## ‘How might we design an integrated care pathway for concerned persons?’

**Presenter:** Aoife Stack (30 minutes)

**Brief overview:** This study addresses this issue within complex health and social care systems: acute hospital emergency departments and community drug and alcohol treatment services. This research question goes beyond integrating health (acute hospitals) & social care (community drug and alcohol services) supports by including community assets.

An Action Design Research Approach (ADR) underpinned the study, involving a series of iterative cycles outlined by Stein et al. (2011). Bowen Family Systems Theory (BFST) (1974) interweaved and complimented the ADR approach. Both A.D.R. and BFST recognise the significance of interplay with the surrounding ecosystem. Both methods emphasise reciprocal feedback loops that redefine the problem and the solution. The application of a Bricolage perspective supported the creation of the ICP from a diverse range of resources that happened to be available.

**Biography:** Aoife is a Social Care Practitioner with over twenty years of experience as a practitioner and manager across various clinical and community settings, including residential care, mental health, and drug and alcohol services in Ireland and Australia. Aoife has a BA(Hons) in Social Care, a Diploma in Drug and Alcohol Studies, an MA in Child, Family, and Community Studies, a Postgraduate Diploma in Innovation Through Design Thinking, and a Special Purpose Award in Designing Innovative Services. Aoife is an accredited clinical supervisor and CRA Adolescent, Adult, and Family Therapist. Aoife is certified in Motivational Interviewing and CBT. Aoife is passionate about applying innovative approaches to problem-solving in social care settings and facilitating lived experience in the design and delivery of services.

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## 12. Policy and Practice

### *‘Informal Kinship Care- promises of policy & hopes for equality’*

**Presenter:** Laura Dunleavy (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Kinship care arises in circumstances when children cannot be cared for by their parents due to parental death, substance misuse, illness, imprisonment, or abandonment. **Kinship Care Ireland (KCI)** work with & for kinship families, aiming to promote the recognition, rights, and entitlements of families in kinship care.

In February 2023, The UN Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that the Irish Government develop ‘a policy on the rights of the children in informal kinship care’.

This promise of policy presents a challenge of ‘Recognising the uniqueness of kinship care, and building conceptual models, in which strengths, complexities and best practice fit coherently’ (O’ Brien, 2012)

Children in informal kinship care are invisible to the system and face many challenges. There are no specific trauma recovery supports available to kinship children & no streamlined access to practical supports. The system is further marginalising a cohort of approximately 10,000+ children & their carers and denying them their rights. The rights issues affecting informal kinship families include access to legal, financial, health and educational support.

**Biography:** Laura Dunleavy is Coordinator of the Kinship Care Ireland program, which is hosted by the charity Treoir. Laura has 11 years’ experience in the social care sector, graduating from D.I.T. and working for 7 years in services for people who were experiencing homelessness. Later working to provide Intensive Family Support within the Cherry Orchard and Ballyfermot community, working alongside families to support buffer the impact of adverse childhood experiences and hidden harm. Within these roles, Laura worked alongside many Kinship Care families, sharing families’ frustrations at a lack of support pathway and equity of access. As program coordinator at Kinship Care Ireland, Laura now works specifically with and for kinship care families, advocating for much necessary policy and legislation, raising awareness of kinship care, and supporting kinship care families nationally.

### *‘Serving our communities - enhancing the professional knowledge of social care workers about the ways climate change disproportionately affects ethnic minorities and the socio-economically disadvantaged’*

**Presenter:** Dr Grainne Ketelaar (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The World Health Organisation (WHO) recognises that there is growing evidence that hazardous chemicals contribute both to health disorders throughout the life-course and to the increased prevalence and incidence of noncommunicable diseases including cancer, urinary and reproductive system diseases, cardiovascular and respiratory diseases, allergies, neurodevelopmental and congenital defects, and endocrine disruption.

One category of concern is known as Endocrine-disrupting chemicals (EDCs)- and these have been recognised a public health priority and important policy issue at European and WHO levels. They have been shown to be associated with hormone-related cancers, obesity, diabetes, cardiovascular disease and reproductive problems. Exposure occurs through consumer products and environmental pollution. The risk for health is especially high for exposure occurring in infants and children, since during early development multiple developing tissues may be affected

**Biography:** Gráinne Ketelaar, PhD, is a lecturer in Health & Social Care in ATU Donegal. She has wide-ranging multi-disciplinary research interests in social care, and in community action to tackle the corporate determinants of health. She has introduced climate-change related modules to both undergraduate and postgraduate courses in ATU Donegal. Grainne’s interest in sustainability and health stems from her involvement with Zero Waste Northwest, Northern Ireland Social Farms & Gardens, and from being a beekeeper. She authored a chapter in the 4<sup>th</sup> edition of ‘Social Care Work’ on ‘Social Care Work and the Challenge of the Climate Emergency’.

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### 13. Policy and Practice

#### *‘Using supervision to challenge equality, diversity and inclusion for social care workers and the communities they serve’*

**Presenter:** Adrian McKenna (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Having recently completed a Level 9 in Clinical Supervision across healthcare professions it has really helped me understand that the training and use of supervision in the social care space is not being utilised to serve us best.

During this presentation the social care workers in attendance will be able to identify how to use supervision effectively, they will get to explore how a positive supervision relationship can help us unbundle the challenges of equality, diversity, and inclusion. We will look at the most effective models of supervision for our sector and challenge the notion that supervision is a management task when it is a support based developmental task.

**Biography:** Adrian McKenna (Ado) is a 59-year-old native of Bray Co Wicklow, Ireland. He is married to Nuala, and they have one son Dave who is a Sub Lieutenant in the Irish Navy. Ado studied Clinical Supervision at Level 9 at ICHAS, Leadership and Management in Social Care in TUD Grangegorman at level 9, he has also studied at DIT, NUI Maynooth, TCD and UCC studying Counselling, Psychology, Disability studies and Self Injury studies. He currently works with a large Dublin-based charity as part of the management team with homeless services. He has worked for many years with young people and adults in residential care, detention services, mental health services and post-adoption services.

He was a Member of the Social Care Workers registration board at [www.coru.ie](http://www.coru.ie) and the Collaborative Forum for Former Residents of Mother & Baby Homes. He is a member Social Care Ireland, Social Justice Ireland, the International Critical Incident Stress Management Foundation and is a Servant Leader Trained professional.

#### *‘Establishing support networks for care leavers who require supports beyond aftercare’*

**Presenters:** Aoife O Brien (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** Wellsprings has been in existence for over 28 years. It was established initially by one person who identified a gap in services for young women who were at risk of ‘falling through the cracks’ and who presented regularly with injuries, addiction, care history and with little to no family and /or meaningful community support. Other commonalities include, not having the safety net of solid familial supports and/or a network of positive community supports. This said, Wellspring has undergone monumental change in their 28 years of existence. It has evolved from a service responding to the specific needs of a cohort of young woman, to a very reputable organisation with a professional team of social care workers (with a varied skill mix) who are very attuned to the transgenerational psychopathologies and trauma backgrounds of the young woman. The ethos of the organisation is a wraparound service of lifelong supports and connection (i.e. no ‘aging out’) which, sets it apart from conventional aftercare service provision in this country.

**Biography:** Aoife O Brien is a Social Care Worker currently working as the outreach Co Ordinator within Wellsprings. She has a vast amount of experience working both in a managerial and frontline capacity. Aoife has worked with children and adults with mild to moderate intellectual disabilities for over 14 years. As Outreach Co Ordinator with Wellsprings, she is currently working with young people and adults with a care history, trauma, and complex needs. The outreach coordinator seeks out funding streams that expand upon the integrative and therapeutic work, which is needs led, strengths based and responsive to the unique needs of the vulnerable cohort that we work with in Wellsprings. Presenting today with Aoife will be Emma Hickey and Melaine Ryan both of whom are experienced social care workers currently working in Wellsprings..

**Aims of the Workshop:** To explore how having a history of care/ being a care leaver can disadvantage a young person post 18, the benefits of lifelong connections especially for young people with a complex profile of trauma history, breaks in attachment, addiction, mental health, mild ID, ASD a dual diagnosis and with little to no family support. Presenting a pilot DAF funded project which looks at the need for certain care leavers need supports beyond 23.

**Lunch**

13:15 pm -  
14:15 pm

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## 14. Workshop

### ‘What does Fitness to Practice involve for social care workers’

**Presenter:** Anthony Kennelly (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** This workshop will explore fitness to practice with participants using Irish case studies.

**Biography:** Anthony is a Legal Programme Developer and Trainer with La Touche Training. He has experience in providing training to professional regulators in the running of legally and procedurally sound fitness to practise inquiries, including training in investigation skills, chairing skills, conduct of inquiries and hearings, due process requirements, unconscious bias awareness, deliberations, weighing of evidence and application of sanctions. Anthony has further experience in providing training to professionals in how best to handle complaints and disciplinary processes with their statutory regulator, in addition to designing and running courses in courtroom skills, expert witness skills and investigation skills. Anthony is also a law lecturer at University College Dublin, with a particular focus on constitutional law, fair procedures, and the rule of law.

Prior to working with La Touche Training, Anthony worked as a solicitor in leading Irish law firms, and as an in-house legal advisor in the Irish public sector.

## 15. Workshop

### ‘Unity in Diversity: A Journey towards Inclusive social Care’

**Presenter:** Zuzana Tesarova & Melody Chinenyanga (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** In this dynamic 90-minute workshop, ‘Unity in Diversity: A Journey towards Inclusive Social Care,’ participants will embark on an immersive exploration of the challenges surrounding equality, diversity, and inclusion in the realm of social care, with a focused lens on the four dimensions of racism. Through a condensed yet impactful agenda, attendees will engage in thought-provoking activities designed to foster practical strategies for promoting inclusivity in their professional practice. Upon completion of the workshop, the participants will be able to demonstrate an increased level of cultural competence and sensitivity in their interaction with diverse individuals and communities. Participants will acquire the knowledge and skills required to engage in collaborative and inclusive social care practices, be able to implement inclusive strategies in their professional practice and promote unity and cohesion.

**Biographies:** Zuzana is an assistant lecturer in social care, TU Dublin, Tallaght campus. Zuzana holds a master’s degree in social education from Comenius University in Slovakia. Throughout her career, she has worked extensively with marginalised groups, including individuals struggling with addiction, those involved in the sex industry, and refugees. Zuzana served as Integration Coordinator at the South Dublin County Partnership for 12 years, where she was instrumental in establishing and facilitating the Female Migrant Workers Network, managing the Intercultural Drop-In Centre, and co-founding the Tallaght Roma Integration Project. She is a board member of Sex Workers Alliance Ireland.

Melody is a professional Librarian who has worked as Library Desk Manager for over 15 years and now working as EDI Lead in TU Dublin. She holds MSc (Econ) Information & Library Studies and Certified Life & Relationship Coach. Melody is interested in research findings in many different fields including the impact of trauma especially racism on wellbeing, how to heal fully from negative experiences, how to enhance male/female relationships and lately studying MPhil topic Does racism have an impact on black professional men’s sense of self and personal relationships.

She is an author of ‘Why self-love is the key to true love’, speaker and amateur performer. She is the Founder of Heart Passion Institute an organisation passionate about healing and researching what facilitates healthy relationships with self and others.

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## 16. Policy and Practice

### ‘An applied sociological approach oriented to the everyday processes and practices of social care work’

**Presenter:** Dr Lorcan Byrne (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The dynamic landscape of Irish social care work has arrived at a consolidatory threshold. Under the auspices of ‘CORU’ the ‘Social Care Work Registration Board’ has made the term ‘Social Care Worker’ a protected title. We are amid a necessary liminal process, a process that is at once full of exciting energy and promise – finally the professional status we have long sought – but also a period of some discomfort and reflection. The standards of proficiency hold a legal status; adherence mandated by legislation. However, the ways these standards are interpreted varies greatly, evidenced by the wide array of undergraduate programme content delivered across the state post-regulation. Our concern is that a critical social science perspective, particularly the sociological perspective, might be undermined, which would be a significant diminution of social care work undergraduate training. Hence, we argue that deepening the engagement of social care with sociology is necessary for the development of our profession.

**Biography:** Dr Lorcan Byrne has been a lecturer in sociology on the social care programme in the Technological University of the Shannon Mid-West, for the past seven years. Lorcan has worked in housing and homeless services since 1996 and is currently a member of the board of management of the ‘Mid-West Simon Community’, and a member of Limerick City and County Council’s advisory group for ‘Community Development, Safety & Regeneration’. His research and teaching focuses on a range of interlinking topics such as the sociology of social care, housing, the home, urban culture, urban regeneration, inequality, poverty, social class, exclusion, and stigma. His current work focuses on fostering a partnerships and engagement between sociology and social care work.

### ‘Innovative practices in social care; bridging disability, design, and higher education’

**Presenter:** John Balfe (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The lived experience of people with disabilities often reveals a stark reality of inequality and limited access to higher education. This project aims to address these challenges by integrating the theoretical principles of rights-based, citizenship, and equality agendas into practical learning. Students in the field of Social Care at the South East Technological University (Wexford Campus) were tasked with expanding their understanding of impairments and disability issues, not just academically but through direct engagement with affected individuals who had a disability in the Wexford area.

A critical aspect of this project was its interdisciplinary approach. Social care students collaborate with people with disabilities in their communities. They then collaborated with peers from architecture and design faculties, focusing on developing person-centred approaches to campus accessibility. The project’s vision was to create a 3D prototype of an accessible campus, considering the nuances of disability and the necessity for inclusive educational spaces and present this to a senior executive management team in the University who has responsibility for the construction and design of a new campus for Wexford and the South East.

**Biography:** John Balfe is a qualified Social Worker, Social Care Worker, Addiction Counsellor, Youth Mentor/Coordinator, Strengthening Families Facilitator and CRA (Community Reinforcement Approach) Therapist. He is currently a full time Lecturer on the Professional Social Care and Early Childhood Education Care Programmes based at the South East Technological University. He commenced his Social Care career having completed a National Diploma and Honours Degree in Applied Social Studies and Social Care from NUI Maynooth. He has worked in the professional areas of disability, family therapy, residential care and youth and community work. Having worked with the Irish Probation Service for a period of 14 years in prisons, community and specialised court settings such as the Drugs Court and served as a Senior Probation Officer covering North inner city Dublin and County. He is currently pursuing a Doctorate in Social Science investigating the impact of regulation on social care pedagogy and practice.

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## 17. Workshop

### ‘Awareness of and working with trans-gender young people’

**Presenters:** Jim Cantwell, Suzanne Walsh & Siobhan Flynn Fogarty (90 minutes)

**Brief overview:** On completion of this workshop, participants will have improved their understanding of this community of young people. Participants will have explored some of the challenges young people who identify as transgender face on their identity journey. Participants will be facilitated to explore some of their own perspectives and processes around working with young people who identify as transgender. Participants will explore the diversity of needs and challenges faced by young people who identify as transgender with regards to inclusion and visibility within Irish society. Through exploration of the topic, improved knowledge of appropriate language, terminology, support pathways, and challenges.

**Biographies:** Jim Cantwell is a lecturer in the Department of Social Care & Early Childhood Studies, School of Humanities at South East Technical University (SETU). Jim previously had twenty-two years of practice as a Social Care Worker in residential social care settings and is also a practicing Integrative Psychotherapist since 2005.

Suzanne Walsh is a lecturer in the Department of Social Care & Early Childhood Studies, School of Humanities at South East Technological University (SETU). Suzanne has been working in child and social care for over 30 years in the fields of child and social care practice, management and third level education. She is a qualified Integrative Psychotherapist with twelve years' experience working with and supporting young people who identify as transgender and their families.

Siobhan Flynn Fogarty is a lecturer in the Department of Social Care & Early Childhood Studies, School of Humanities at South East Technological University (SETU). She has over twenty years' experience working in social care practice, early years services, family support in the voluntary sector and management. She has been lecturing on both the Early Years and Social Care programmes since 2006.

## 18. Policy/Practice

### ‘Celebrating difference’

**Presenter:** Caitriona Clarke (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** In this workshop, Caitriona will present a piece about working with separated children/young people seeking international protection who are moving into residential aftercare in Don Bosco Care. Our Aftercare house opened in 2021 and is one of only two residential aftercare services in Dublin for this cohort of young people although the need continues to grow for these services.

Our model of care is trauma informed. Our Ethos is closely aligned with the principles of therapeutic care. We accept every young person where they are at. Building positive trusting relationships is at the core of our work. Support for staff and facilitated spaces to process and reflect are strongly encouraged to keep us on task. As part of this workshop, I intend to explore these approaches to work and how they are applied in the day-to-day care programme. In this workshop I will bring the voice of the young people who have been living in our service to reflect the challenges they have experienced and continue to experience living in Ireland. I hope to represent the issues that are important to them and their families from feedback we have received from them during their time here.

**Biography:** Caitriona has been working in social care for over 24 years. She completed her degree in Applied Social Care in 1998 and went on to gain a Masters in Therapeutic Care in 2008. Caitriona has managed residential and aftercare houses for the past 20 years. She has also worked as part of a multi-disciplinary team from 2005-2008 with SIATT. In 2021 Caitriona set up a residential aftercare house as part Don Bosco Care services in partnership with Tusla. She is currently the chair of the Irish Association of Social Care Managers SIG group. Caitriona is passionate about providing high quality supervision, training, and support to staff.

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*‘Discussion as part of a series of results derived from the Sexual Violence Survey (SVS) which was conducted by the Central Statistics Office in 2022’*

**Presenter:** Helen McGrath (45 minutes)

**Brief overview:** The Sexual Violence Survey 2022 was published by the Central Statistics Office last year. It represents a new baseline for the prevalence of sexual violence in Ireland. In this presentation, the Sexual Violence Survey will be introduced. Concepts and definitions related to sexual violence will be clearly explained. The prevalence of sexual violence for men and women across Ireland with different patterns for each will be highlighted. Challenges in survey based measurement of sensitive topics, the constraints in making comparisons and future work in this area will be shared.

**Biography:** Helen McGrath has been a statistician for over 15 years. She has worked in areas such as housing, planning and education. Most recently she was the project lead in delivering the Sexual Violence Survey which was conducted by the CSO in 2022.

## 19. Workshop

*‘Interactive exploration of the use of restrictive practices using a reflective lens to identify innovative methods to eliminate and or reduce the use of restriction’*

**Presenter:** Martha Mc Ginn

**Brief overview:** HIQA Thematic approach to reduce the use of restrictive practice has shone a light on the use of restriction in services and how to support those who engage in risk to life behaviours. This interactive workshop will allow participants to explore a case study of an individual whose behaviour is risk to life. The participants will be asked to go on an experiential journey to challenge them to consider approaches and practices by offering them challenging questions which will make them consider their own values, belief, and cultural responsiveness. It will engage them in critical thinking that they can use in practice to reduce the use of restrictive practice particularly in diverse client groups, such those with complex intellectual disabilities, mental health difficulties or those who have been exposed to trauma.

**Biography:** Martha is a Company Director of the National Institute of Intellectual Disability Studies. Martha completed her HDip in Learning Disability studies UCD and is a RNID. She has a B.Sc. Hons Degree in Professional Social Work specialising in working with People with Intellectual Disabilities. Martha studied under Valarie Sinason world-renowned psychoanalyst (Intellectual Disability study), at the Tavistock Centre London. Martha is a winner of a BILD International Award for Research and Innovation for her work’s direct impact on their family lives. She also has a Degree in Professional Management of Complex Behaviour from DKIT. Martha’s practical experience includes working with children and adults with complex needs, such as those with individuals with Intellectual Disabilities, Autism and Complex Behaviour.


**Conference Close**

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