



DEVELOPING TOGETHER

SOCIAL WORK TEACHING PARTNERSHIP



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| Covid 19 - Celebrating Social Work Practice | Issue 1 | Date: 15.5.20 |

Dear reader,

After such a positive response to April's newsletter, in which we focused on examples of excellent practice across the Partnership and included a number of practical resources for social work students and professionals, we have decided to release a similar 'celebration' each fortnight so we can continue to inspire and support those working and studying in the region during these unprecedented times with good news stories and helpful resources.

We hope you enjoy the latest edition!

Best wishes,

Libbi, Sue, Josie and Sarah



Examples of Excellent Practice

Achieving for Children (AfC) shared some examples of their super-colleagues - people who are doing really special work at the moment and going above and beyond.

Lucy, Business Development Team:

"Lucy was manning the phones for Kingston and was calling round residents who have been discharged from hospital to check they are OK and if there is anything they need. Her intuition made her pay attention to a particular person, and ended up calling the paramedics who arrived within 15 minutes to give this person insulin, which potentially saved her life."


Danielle, NE Cluster Youth Service:

"Danielle had organised weekly food deliveries to our more vulnerable families in both boroughs whose children attend youth clubs. She also is running daily art, photography and creative writing competitions on Instagram and is organising virtual youth club sessions so young people can stay active and connected. This includes music, dance and exercise sessions."

Lorraine, Safeguarding Family Support Worker:

"Lorraine has been going above and beyond in her role and ensuring vulnerable families have enough food and fuel to last during this unpredictable period. Lorraine has been reaching out to these families to ensure all is well and providing ideas on how to entertain the children during this time and how to ease conflict when it arises. Lorraine has been helping the social worker in the team with their safeguarding visits as well."

Also, in keeping with the theme for Mental Health Week next week, Linda and Holly from the Workforce Development Team have prepared a Kindness Calendar (right). If you'd like a high resolution copy of this, please email admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk



Be Kind this May & June

The Wellness at Work programme is promoting the theme of kindness for the Mental Health Awareness Week.

The Mental Health Foundation want to use the week to celebrate the thousands of acts of kindness that are so important to our mental health, and also to start a discussion about the kind of society we want to shape as we emerge from the coronavirus outbreak.

Our challenge is to try and show some kindness to someone at least every other day. To help, we've created a Kindness Calendar which is packed full of simple acts of kindness. You could use the blank squares to record ways you experience kindness yourself or record other acts of kindness you make (and it may give you ideas to pass on to others too!)

Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday	
18 Send a letter or card to someone	19 	20 Bring a neighbour's bin in for them	21 Post a gift to someone	22 Pick up litter from the street to create a cleaner environment	23 	24 Make breakfast for the people you live with	
Thank staff in shops for serving you	25 	26 Call a colleague to see how they are	27 	28 Post a gift to someone	29 	30 	31 Make breakfast for the people you live with
1 	2 Give someone a compliment	3 Offer to clean your neighbour's car	4 	5 Write a letter of appreciation to someone	6 	7 Leave a note at home to thank someone you live with	
8 Let someone go in front of you in a queue	9 Encourage someone	10 	11 Bake someone something and leave it on their doorstep	12 	13 Leave a note at home to thank someone you live with	14 	
15 Do something kind for yourself	16 	17 Do some food shopping for an elderly person	18 	19 Send flowers to a friend or family member	20 	21	



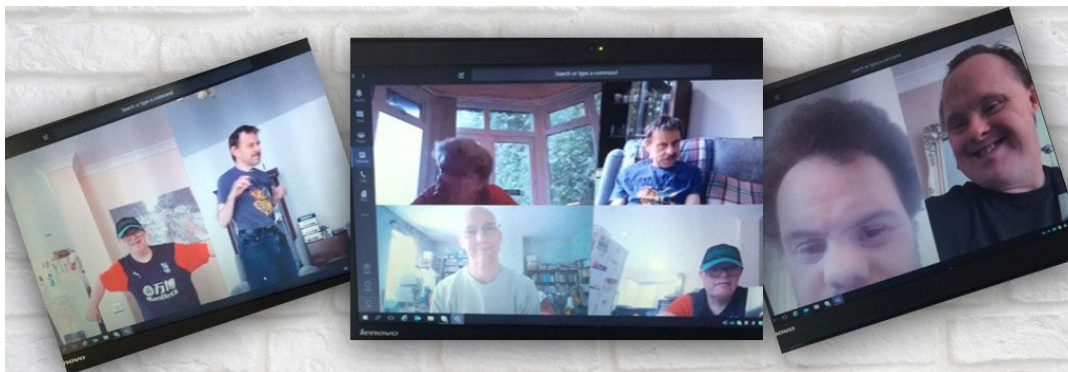
There is a lot of great work taking place within **Croydon Adults** with people who have learning disabilities. One example is the newly-formed virtual hubs, known as the Friends Connect social groups.

Staff working for the council's Active Lives Service have been facilitating online video sessions for people who would usually meet at their hub centres around the borough. When open, these hubs offer a range of facilities and activities, including dance classes, cookery and sensory rooms. The virtual hubs facilitate group video chats, connect smaller friendship groups and individual friends online to prevent feelings of isolation and a decline in emotional wellbeing and mental health.

As well as the Friends Connect sessions, Active Lives staff have been using the platform to involve hub users in online keep fit classes, quizzes and virtual discussion groups about the current situation caused by Covid-19, giving advice and useful tips on what people can do to maintain their wellbeing.

In addition, staff are using the virtual hubs to continue their outreach work staying in touch with individual club regulars.

Richard St John-Roberts, the carer of two clients using the virtual hub, said: "Errol and David are enjoying being able to see and talk to their friends...Being able to participate in an exercise workout with Heidi is an added bonus and we all feel better afterwards. Both definitely give it the thumbs up."



By Meredith Bennett, Support Coordinator in the Kingston Hub, Adult Social Care

My usual day to day role is a Support Coordinator in the Kingston Hub, Adult Social Care. During the Covid-19 pandemic I was approached by my team manager to act as a liaison to the Kingston Stronger Together Hub and support the Access Team.

This has involved acting as an additional front door for enquiries coming from the community via the Kingston Stronger Together Hub; this could be via a telephone call, the newly designed website pages and/or the online referral form. I am approached using numerous communication methods, including a Google hangout group I created which includes the Access Team, senior social workers and team managers, and the use of DASH database (a specially created database in light of the Covid-19 pandemic).

These enquiries range from requests for simple routes of contact into the council, someone to speak to, food parcels and more complex enquiries including accessing bereavement support following a death of a family member due to Covid-19, requests for urgent mental health assessment and allocation of a social worker to provision homecare.

I was able to lean on my wealth of knowledge from working in adult social care in differing settings over the last 6 years and my total employment with RBK for 15 years. Working collaboratively with the Kingston Stronger Together Hub and Access has encouraged the forming of a new support network and new proactive team relationships.

Early reflection on the collaborative working during the Covid-19 pandemic, I can only praise my colleagues new and old so highly seeing the daily demonstration of good practice, despite not being familiar with the service of adult social care and how it's delivered through strict legislation and ever-changing protocol, policy and procedure. Also, the sharing of information, use of a new database without the usual formal training, the communication and the use of all available technology, including video calls and virtual team meetings.

The personal impact on me, I can only say that this has been, and continues to be, positive and I'm proud to share my experience with colleagues new and old. It has been hard and rewarding work, stretching my abilities and workload management skills. Balancing my commitments to my team, those allocated to me, my new colleagues relying on me and being the quick link between first contact and the obtaining of support for those in need, whether due to the Covid-19 pandemic or our 'bread and butter' work.

I believe that the long term impact of working collaboratively will leave its 'corporate' mark, identifying that 'new ways of working' aren't scary and can be trusted upon. I will continue to advocate for 'agile working' and using all the in-house skills we hold as a collective team.

Working together – carer crisis

An urgent case came in last week when a severely disabled client's wife became unwell. The wife reported that the care provider was only covering one care call, as opposed to two, and a SA concern was raised for neglect. The wife rang our duty officer stating that she was in pain following a fall and was reluctant to go into hospital, due to her role as informal carer. The case was allocated to a named social worker within a few hours for a telephone assessment/review. During the wife's admission to COVID ward due to her symptoms, an urgent increase on care package was needed.

Challenges:

- Social distancing in small living environment;
- Urgent increase of care: current provider or new provider (in light of carer capacity and SA concern), lack of PPE for care providers;
- Issues if wife was confirmed with COVID 19 and the increased risk to client (who has two skin sores and is diabetic)

Successes:

- Wife's COVID test result was negative and she was discharged home;
- Brokerage team worked very hard to arrange a new care provider but they did not have sufficient goggles for the carer. Reablement Team agreed to give two sets of goggles so new provider could start the same evening (within hours!);
- Social worker quickly drafted care/support plan and liaised with client/wife/DN/hospital/care providers/LBM teams but stayed very calm and with critical thinking (What if? Why? How?)

Power of persuasion – a long standing case of hoarding

A client who is a double amputee with reduced mobility and lots of health conditions, lives in a very hoarded property rented from a housing association with a very limited support network. She has been assessed as having mental capacity but does not engage with professionals and often declines home visits from social workers and nurses. A housing officer alerted LBM and Nursing team that client was not able to mobilise for a few days. Two social workers and two nurses visited urgently and highlighted the level of risks. Due to the hoarding and low capacity of domiciliary care, it was felt that client could not be supported in her own home during COVID 19 situation. After a long joint visit and hours of persuasions from social workers and nurses, the client reluctantly agreed to go into a residential home short term. The next day, one of the social workers went back to visit (on her non-working day as she feared that client may change her mind afterwards) and she called for an ambulance and helped client to pack.

Challenges:

- Client may decline services again;
- There may not be any availability for care home placements;
- Risks on professionals who were visiting due to client's living environment

Successes:

- As both social and health care professionals visited at the same time, client was persuaded to accept an interim care home placement;
- Care home reports that client has settled well despite our apprehension!



Sutton's Short Term Assessment and Reablement Team (START) is all about getting people home from hospital and back to living as independently as possible for as long as possible. Now, with the pressure on us to support the NHS in the battle against COVID-19, this work is more necessary than ever.

The team work within the Sutton Health and Care at Home service, in collaboration with health partners. The goal is to ensure residents' needs are met with access to health, equipment and therapy, as a truly functional multidisciplinary team. The referrals and demand over the past few weeks have been complex and challenging in so many ways and the team has not faltered in their approach to ensuring these needs are met.

A typical urgent response example is one of the referrals received recently. A family member reported concerns about her mother being alone, frail and unwell at home. Her father had sadly passed away the week before and another family member was very unwell in hospital. There was no hesitation in the team going out to visit to assess what was needed. They were prepared for any eventuality and the resident was very pleased to see them. There was a need for care support and liaison with health partners and the latest update is that the lady is doing well.

In another good news story from the START team, Sutton told us about an elderly couple due to be celebrating 64 years of marriage who almost didn't when the husband (who was recovering from Coronavirus) was discharged to a care home placement – potentially being separated from his wife for their anniversary. However, thanks to the intervention of the team, who facilitated his return home in a safe way, the couple were able to celebrate the anniversary together!

The **Family Support and Care Planning Team** also shared this wonderful example:

"The thought of remote Hearings in the world of the family court seemed unimaginable several weeks ago. However what we have seen in recent weeks of the judiciary has been truly inspirational in our bid to ensure that those children who are most at risk and require state intervention, continue to be protected. With the closure of family courts, remote hearings have, within in a short timeframe, become norm. Although there are, no doubt, some difficulties in the execution to ensure fair and just consideration for all parties, we have, in Sutton, been witness to several hearings where the court has endorsed our care plans for children to be separated from their families in order to provide immediate safeguarding measures.

These examples cross the age span of children and young people and provide us with evidence of sound teamwork, from the legal planning process, to the formulation of timely statements and care plans, the identification of suitable placements in these most challenging of times, to court representation, the presentation of evidence and ultimately the safe placement of the child with alternate carers. This work has involved both the localities and court team and demonstrates just how business can continue as usual."

Supporting Practice Educator trainees

As it was not possible to provide the Practice Learning Workshops which would have supported Practice Educators and trainees supporting Masters in Social Work students on placement, trainees are being offered an alternative, in the form of a live, online small group meeting next week.

Our Practice Consultants in the Teaching Partnership Team (who are also experienced Practice Educators), Sarah and Josie, and the module leader, Dermot Brady, will each facilitate a virtual small group meeting next week, to provide trainees with a reflective space and to address queries regarding the final reports for these students.

It is anticipated that these will also be rolled out in August, in preparation for the next set of placements, if we are working under similar circumstances.

Supporting students to complete their placements

The Teaching Partnership has been working closely with Kingston University to support those final year MSW students who were unable to complete the final 20 days of their placements in our partner organisations. Children and Families and Adult Services scenarios have been created and a programme of activities drawn up to support students in meeting their learning needs and evidence their social work practice in line with the PCF. Hopefully this will ensure these students are able to complete the final placement component of their qualification and graduate as Social Workers with their peers ready to apply for NQSW posts. Sarah, Josie and Sue in the Teaching Partnership have also enjoyed putting their acting skills to the test through being involved in role plays and simulated phone and video calls.

Congratulations to all the MSW students who have completed their final placements at this challenging time and thank you to all the Practice Educators who have been able to support students whilst having to respond to the Covid 19 emergency. We have have been told of some excellent and creative examples of practice by students whilst they have been on placement so Well Done All!



COVID-19: Useful Resources

Resources for social work students and professionals



Research and practice - virtual technology:

[SSPA Knowledge Exchange](#) - Moving practice online - how social workers are adapting their practices, technologies and processes in the covid-19 context

[SCIE Advice](#) - COVID-19: using digital technology in relationship-based practice to bridge the gap in social distancing

General reading:

[Article from The Guardian](#) - 'We can't go back to normal': how will coronavirus change the world?

[Social Work 2020 under Covid-19 Magazine](#) - This is a free online magazine which will be produced during the Covid-19 crisis, edited by an editorial collective, about issues that are of interest to those who use social work or social care services, those who provide them and those who undertake teaching or research around them.

[Thank You Letter](#) - A letter thanking the social care workforce for their help on coronavirus (COVID-19) so far

Webinars for managers:

[Skills for Care Webinars](#) - A series of webinars on a range of topics to support managers and their service during the COVID-19 pandemic

Recruitment:

[Skills for Care Guide](#) - Safe and rapid recruitment during COVID-19

[Skills for Care Guide](#) - Distance recruitment tips - virtual interviewing

COVID-19 testing:

Read the press release: [Further expansion of access to coronavirus testing helps protect the most vulnerable](#)

Read the news story: [Coronavirus testing extended to social workers without symptoms of disease](#)

Policy:

[DfE Guidance](#) - Coronavirus: conducting a SEND risk assessment

[DfE Guidance](#) - Coronavirus: guidance for children's social care services

Resources aimed at Children & Family practitioners



Virtual technology:

[RIP Webinar](#) - Digital family contact time: sharing and building knowledge

[RIP Blog](#) - Virtual contact between children and their birth families

[Article from Irish Social Work](#) on the utilisation of video messaging for younger children in foster care

[Nuffield Family Justice Observatory](#) - Considerations when using digital technology to maintain family contact

Safety online:

[NSPCC & O2 Parent workshops and webinars](#) - Free 30 minute webinars for groups of parents, grandparents and carers, making it easy for you to keep your family safe online.

[NSPCC Advice](#) - Talking to your child about online safety

[NSPCC Advice](#) - Inappropriate or explicit content

Research and practice:

[Community Care Article](#) - How social workers can tackle the ethical and practice challenges of covid-19 - guidance from PCFSWs

[RIP Blog](#) - Social work with children and families in the pandemic PART 1

[RIP Blog](#) - Social work with children and families in the pandemic PART 2

Practice research which can be linked to changes in SW practice due to Covid 19:

[PSPD Tool - Safe uncertainty](#) - A visual tool to help practitioners critically analyse their work with families and explore what factors may be influencing their perceptions of risk (and how much uncertainty we can tolerate). It can helpfully be used in supervision to aid critical reflection.

[Stepping Up, Stepping Down Report](#) - How families make sense of working with welfare services

Safeguarding:

[CASPAR Newsletter](#) - Gives weekly updates from NSPCC on safeguarding/child protection

Mental Health:

[Resources](#) - For supporting children and young people's mental health

Homeschooling:

[DfE Blog](#) - New national helpline for parents launched

CSE (not related to COVID-19):

[NSPCC Podcast](#) - CSE - Protect & Respect

Resources aimed at Adult and Mental Health practitioners



Useful information from central government:

[Government Guidance](#) - Coronavirus (COVID-19): guidance for people receiving direct payments

[Government Press Release](#) - Launch of new portal for care homes to arrange coronavirus testing

Research:

[A Position Paper from The Lancet](#) - Multidisciplinary research priorities for the COVID-19 pandemic: a call for action for mental health science

Information and guidance:

[Skills for Care Guidance](#) - From the Tavistock and Portman NHS Foundation Trust - COVID-19 Guidance for the Support and Wellbeing of Adult Social Workers and Social Care Professionals in a Pandemic Crisis

[NICE Advice & Guidance List](#) - Access the repository of rapid guidelines and evidence summaries from NICE to support the NHS and social care

[DHSC Blog](#) - Social work with adults in unfamiliar circumstances



Free counselling sessions for London care staff:

Frontline care staff in London are being offered free support from qualified and trainee psychotherapists and psychotherapeutic counsellors from the Southern Association for Psychotherapy and Counselling (www.safpacfrontline.co.uk). Up to three phone or Skype sessions of 30-50 minutes are being offered. If you are interested please email info@safpacfrontline.co.uk and a therapist will contact you to make arrangements.

Other useful links/information:

[BBC Article](#) - Trust me, I'm a Doctor: What's the best way to beat Stress?

[Information from Mind](#) - Coronavirus and your wellbeing

[NHS Advice](#) - Mental wellbeing while staying at home

[SelfCare Psychology Blog](#) - Self Care for Practitioners Working in Challenging Roles

[SelfCare Psychology Resources](#) - FREE Frontline Key Worker Self Care Acts cards

[SelfCare Psychology Resource Hub](#) - Provides links to the sources SelfCare Psychology use when they train, write and develop resources. Covers a variety of topics including Professional Trauma and Fatigue, Vicarious Trauma, Resilience, Peer Support etc.



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Thank you for reading!

If you have any good news stories, examples of excellent practice, or helpful resources that you'd like to share, please send these through to us at: admin@developingtogetherswtp.org.uk

We would also be grateful to receive comments or suggestions on the newsletter, including any topics you'd like to see covered in future editions.

P.S. The Association of Child Protection Professionals is asking for practitioners to write a reflection on practice during the pandemic - you can find out more [here](#).

Please let us know if you decide to do this, as we'd love to publish them on the Developing Together [website](#) too!