

DCC-i Newsletter

March 2022 Edition

Welcome to our first newsletter for 2022, a lot has happened since our last edition, and so we are taking the opportunity to provide some updates about what we've been up to and tell you all about some of the new projects, and new crew, that are helping us to start 2022 with a bang!

This edition also coincides with World Social Work day, which this year is 14th March 2022 (and yes it was timed on purpose 😊).

Expect a few little easter eggs through the sessions if you are booked with us that week!

As always, we'd love to hear your thoughts and views on our activities, services (or our shiny new look newsletter which admittedly isn't quite as new look now), get in touch in the [usual way!](#)



World Social Work Week – March 2022

As part of the Social Work England Independent Programme. Chloe, one of our directors, and Gail, one of our new Consultant Social Workers, in collaboration with colleagues at Warwickshire County Council, will be delivering a session on the 14th March, considering the interface between children and adult services, and safeguarding.

It's part of our mission to do it
#bettertogether.

We hope to see some of you there!

For more information and the full independent schedule of events visit the [web page here](#), to book onto Chloe and Gail's session (14th March 2022; 2pm – 4pm MS Teams) email crew@dcc-i.co.uk



Web: www.dcc-i.co.uk

Email: crew@dcc-i.co.uk

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News, Views, and Updates

Our Open Programmes

- 13th April 2022:
Best Interest Assessor / DoLS Refresher
Tavistock & Portman Programme delivered by the DCC-I Crew.
[Click for more information](#)

Social Work Practice Development Forum

- 29th March 2022 @ 10am
Peer Reflection Forum

We are excited to announce that one of our new CSWs (more about the crew on p.6) Gail, is facilitating a networking forum on MS Teams, aimed at those who are either advanced practitioners in adult social care or involved in learning and development in adult social care.



The idea of these forums is to share good practice and ideas and generally network with other practice leads.

This is free, open nationally, and any social workers from our customer organisations are welcome. A topic is selected by the forum as an area of interest and attendees who have knowledge and expertise in that area can opt to present. We have a short presentation and then you will go into breakout rooms to network and discuss the content. We meet for just an hour to allow us all time in our busy diaries every 8 weeks.

The next session is on **29th March at 10am** via teams and Warwickshire will be presenting on Audits and Quality Assurance.

If you would like to be added to the invite list or would like to know more, please email crew@dcc-i.co.uk

MH Alliance Open Letter: Update

Last edition we reported that we were proud to be one of the signatory organisations on an open letter sent from the Mental Health Alliance to the Secretary of State for Health, highlighting the institutional racism that exists in our mental health system. We are pleased to report we have had a response and an acknowledgement of the issues raised. What this means in real terms is yet to be seen and the developments that accompany the Mental Health Bill 2022 are now eagerly awaited so we can start to find out.

E-Learning...but not as you know it!

Can we make E-learning more interesting and engaging for busy professionals? Can we turn a medium that many avoid like the plague and only do when they must (often begrudgingly), into a learning experience that makes a real contribution to the CPD offer? This isn't a rhetorical question, it's an actual one! (And one we have been puzzling with in DCC-i land over the last few months)

So, given the shift to the digital world which has changed how we all see, and do CPD, is it possible that we can give a DCC-I make-over to e-learning and make it fun, engaging, and educational all at once? We sort of think we have managed it in the Teams room, so surely its possible...well we are about to find out and we think we've managed it if our tester volunteers are anything to go by 😊





So, what do you think? Is it possible? Want to talk to us about how we're approaching it? We are taking 'answers on a [digital postcard](#)' for ideas and suggestions (maybe even an odd prize here and there for good ones) as we develop this area of our offer. Please email us any thoughts or views, particularly about:

- How you think the E-learning offer could be improved generally?
- What would make you want to complete an e-learning package?

A Little Reminder: last editions highlights.

While publishing an edition once a quarter allows for us to give you all a better insight into the effectiveness and outcomes of our activities (as well as reporting on some of the national developments). It also means that you've had hundreds of emails and slept since then!

Also, *we now deliver so much between us, that even we can't remember everything that we do!*

So, we have decided to introduce this little reminder slot as a permanent feature, to remind you of what is available to commission from the Crew!

- Adult Social Care Training.
- Children's Social Care Training.
- Mental Health Training.
- Social Work Skills Training.
- BIA and AMHP Refresher Training.
- BIA qualifying training.
- PE, NQSW and ASYE Assessor Training.

- Multi-Agency Training – for Police, Education, Medical Staff, Charity Staff.
- Modules for qualifying and post-qualifying social work programmes.
- Action Learning Sets & Practice Support.
- Individual & Group Supervision.
- Learning Events & Workshops.
- Conference Presentations.
- Independent BIA Practice Services – DoLS / COP DoL / MCA Assessments.
- Training evaluation.
- DoLS PRPR / Advocacy services.
- Critical friend scrutiny and review.
- Independent Children's Services – Parenting, Kinship, Fostering and Sibling assessments.
- Independent s42 enquiries, SARs & peer review services.
- Practice Education, ASYE Assessment and PEPS Mentoring.
- Coaching & mentoring.
- Service evaluation needs assessment and research projects.
- Development of competency and governance frameworks and policies.
- Development of practitioner guidance and tools.
- Slick use of tech, delivery support and a rocking soundtrack for all our CPD and live development services.

[Contact us](#) for an informal discussion about how we might be able to support practice or CPD in your area or organisation.



Crew Update: It's a bit like busses!

Last edition we reported that the recruitment for our new consultant social workers had been a success. So finally, we are here, notice periods have been worked and, in this edition, we are finally ready to tell you a bit more about the two excellent social work practitioners who are that are bringing their skills and talent to our crew.

Introducing.... Gail Heslop, Consultant Social Worker (MCA & Safeguarding).

Gail joins us from Warwickshire CC. where she was MCA Principal Practitioner and comes with many years' experience in adult safeguarding, MCA and practice education. Gail is a qualified BIA and is already practicing as part of our COP DoL assessment team. Let's hear a little about Gail and her thoughts about joining the Crew.....



"Hi everyone, I'm Gail, one of the new Consultant Social Worker's here at DCC-i. I am looking forward to meeting lots of you on various training courses and will mainly be covering MCA and Adult Safeguarding. As a BIA and previous safeguarding lead these areas of practice are a real passion for me and I love sharing that knowledge, and of course learning from others.

My first week with DCC-i has been a whirlwind after working for local authorities for the whole of my career.

I am surrounded by screens and scary tech equipment and despite reassurance from the lovely team that I will learn how to use it I can't seem to shake the self-doubt and constant playing of A Whole New World from Aladdin in my head!! Like most social workers I had to adapt quickly when the pandemic hit and we needed to change our way of working but it has very much been luck and a need-to-know approach, which I can no longer get away with! It has been a long but fascinating week observing the various styles of training and different topics and the support network behind the polished training that we see on the other side of the screen.

This week has generated lots of reflection for me, observing the training for children's services particularly took me outside of my comfort zone having worked with adults my whole career. I was struck by the vast number of forms, law, and procedures they are required to follow and will never moan about a 12-page form again!!

Despite these differences one thing that has really struck me being in the fortunate position of an observer (for a change) is the passion and commitment we all have to the people we work with. I think like most of us when I was busy 'doing' I would often forget the difference we do make to people's lives even when we/they don't realise it. I look forward to meeting more of you soon 😊"



Introducing... Helen Kane, Consultant Social Worker (Adults & AMHP).



Helen joins us from Dudley MBC, where she was Assistant Team Manager and a practicing AMHP. She is a qualified BIA and has strengths-based leadership and trauma-informed practice in her areas of interest and additional training.

You'll be finding out about Helen next time, as well as updates about new associates, and an update on the recruitment of our new Children & Families Principal Social Worker, in future editions.

We were blown away by the interest out there to join our merry band, so thanks again to everyone involved!

An Update from Our Crew Cop, Steve Baker (yes, he's still here!)

Last edition Steve ([@SteveyBMH](#)) was just starting out with the Crew, in this edition he and Tony ([@asifAMHP](#)) have now been out and about, working with AMHPs and Cops, so here's Steve's feedback on the experience so far....has [@asifAMHP](#) been sharing the #AMHPSnacks? Let's see what he has to say 😊

"With all the restrictions in relation to Covid now formally coming to an end, we are starting to learn to live with the virus. As a result, much of the life we previously enjoyed is starting to return which includes getting people back to attending training courses and ensuring that their CPD is updated.

Resourcing levels have meant that many organisations have not been able to release their staff, but things are now starting to pick up again.

Since I joined DCC-i in February, I have been involved in delivering on-line training to AMHPs and police officers in Warwickshire.



The course is entitled A Mental Health Act Refresher - Developing a Shared Understanding of the Mental Health Act in Practice.

The ethos of the course is about learning together in a multi-agency forum and is jointly delivered by myself and my esteemed AMHP colleague, and DCC-i Principal Social Worker for Mental Health, Tony Dean.

What I have observed, is that there is much ignorance around understanding the practical elements of the Mental Health Act and what better way to learn and discuss this subject than sharing discussions and debate with both police officers and AMHPs in the same (virtual) room together?

Too often, organisations train in silos and views are understandably very one sided but learning is vastly improved when done in such an honest and open environment with colleagues who share different perspectives.





Tony and I have just completed the first three sessions with colleagues in Warwickshire.

The feedback has been extremely positive, and people clearly enjoy the multi-agency format. To understand why the police, respond in a certain way or to have a better appreciation for the difficulties AMHPs face, for example in coordinating s135 (1) warrants, are just some of the benefits of learning and discussing together.

It is hoped that many more areas will consider allowing their staff to attend future sessions so that we can all improve our learning and understanding and provide a better quality of care for those in crisis."

Want Steve and Tony in your area? Get in touch in the usual ways.... #Bettertogether



Continuing our #BetterTogether theme, we are thrilled to introduce a new edition to our associate non-social work crew, this time our very own fireperson!

Introducing Alan Swift, who after 25 years with the West Midlands Fire Service has now struck out on his own continuing the themes and interests, he has developed through his career.

Introducing Our Crew Fireperson

Alan is a recently retired fire officer completing 25 years' service with West Midlands Fire Service, involved in several roles primarily managing teams in the Prevention department.



Supporting and advising on local, regional, and national levels regarding vulnerable adults on topics such as adult safeguarding, disabilities, fire risk and health inequalities, and supporting and empowering internal staff as a mentor and coach.

Alan is an accomplished British Sign Language user and has achieved BSL level 6. He currently supports vulnerable adults in the community improving people's lives and empowering them to de-clutter their homes - visit [New Horizons Clearance](#) for more details of Alan's independent services.

Alan will be working with Daisy and Gail to develop and contribute to our programmes on hoarding which we will be developing over the next 12 months with several LA areas.

Want to know more? [Contact us in the usual ways.](#)



Our 'Spotlight On' Section



Spotlight On... Achieving Best Evidence

Over recent months we have been aware of an increase in demand for Achieving Best Evidence (AbE) training. In response, we have begun to develop our own interactive ABE training programme.

The programme will equip practitioners to have a comprehensive understanding of the Ministry of Justice's Guidance in Achieving Best Evidence. It will enable professionals to use the principles and good practice guidance in practice, as well confidently secure ABE compliant evidence for criminal proceedings where this is required. This detailed programme will be of interest to all those involved in undertaking investigations of vulnerable adults and children.

Partner agencies are welcome to attend, and together we will explore the key principles underpinning the Government's statutory Working Together to Safeguard (2018) and Care Act statutory guidance (updated 2021) and consider how this is relevant when collaborating and co-operating during safeguarding enquiries.

We'll be exploring the different roles and responsibilities we hold, and how they work together to get the very best outcomes for children or adults at risk of harm, abuse, or neglect. Watch this space for regular updates, or [contact us](#) to discuss developing a bespoke AbE course for your workforce.

Spotlight On... Court Skills

We have always delivered Court Skills training, but we are now able to offer our very own associate lawyer, Tim Spencer-Lane to cross-examine your delegates and advise them how to prepare!

We offer Court Skills for NQSW's and experienced

staff across Children's Service, Adult Services and Mental Health services.

This includes supporting delegates to write good quality evidence which is key to your experience on the stand!

The better the report, the easier it is to give evidence. We can take delegates through all the stages of children's care proceedings from PLO to Final Hearing, prepare them for a Mental Health Tribunal or put them in a virtual Court of Protection to give evidence on a contested Deprivation of Liberty! If you can be cross-examined in a room full of your peers – doing it for real will be a lot less scary.

Our newest course to join the suite is a best practice course on *'How to undertake and record family time'*.

This is aimed at contact supervisors who contribute to care proceedings and may have to give evidence. [Contact us](#) for more information or to commission us to develop a bespoke programme for your team.



A Focus on Practice

We are aware that some of you think of us as just training providers...we're not, we are also very much still in practice. So, for this edition we are highlighting the practice side of our activities and giving you a little insight into what we are up to, (and what we could potentially provide for you too), when we aren't in the virtual training rooms with your delegates.

We accept referrals from LA, NHS Organisations, and private work for Court Proceedings via Solicitor commissions.

Contact crew@dcc-i.co.uk for more information and an informal discussion about how we might be able to assist you.

COP DoL Assessment Services

We are pleased to have now established a specialist BIA service for assessments requiring the Re X procedure.

We are working closely with CCG colleagues to develop this service further. Providing assessment and practice support for CHC and other commissioning services, who need to refer to the Court to ensure community DoL arrangements are lawful and provide the required Article 5 (HRA 1998) safeguards. This applies for those unable to consent to care arrangements, but who are receiving accommodation, care and treatment which constitutes a DoL.

We are always available for a chat, but we have an online referral form set up for colleagues in [Bedfordshire, Luton & Milton Keynes](#), if this is you, ping us the details and we'll email you straight back.

Mental Capacity Act Assessments

As we have become more involved in COP DoL and community placement arrangements, we have also been increasingly asked for input into complex MCA determinations. We are able to undertake independent capacity assessments, where there are contrasting views or uncertainty.

Most of our adult Crew, and some of our Children & Young People's Crew, are BIA and BIA/AMHP qualified practitioners, with current approvals and Social Work England registration. All of which are engaged in independent practice as part of their core roles with the organisation.

Amongst our team we have expertise and experience in young people, trauma-informed practice, systemic practice, substance misuse and the full range of legal frameworks. If we can't assist... we usually know a woman (or man) who can! [Ask us to find out more.](#)

Best Interest Assessment & DoLS Scrutiny Services

We appear to have a surprising number of BIA's over here! We are not quite sure how that happened, we aren't hoarding them we promise! In fact, most of us are also signed up with our local areas to act as Independent BIA's!

If new Crew are appointed and live in your area, expect a call from one of us to sign them up and offer our services ([but feel free to ask](#)).



We are also able to offer scrutiny and authoriser services if your organisation needs to consider outsourcing this element of the process.

All our MCA work is carried out by qualified BIA's, all experienced previous LA and/or NHS managers, if you would like to discuss this option further, [just get in touch!](#)

Specialist Children's Social Care Assessments

In addition to providing MCA and COP DoL assessments for young people, we are also able to offer independent Capacity Assessments for parents and carers and Parenting Assessments, Special Guardianship Assessments, Kinship Fostering Assessments and Sibling Assessments in respect of Care Proceedings.

Amongst our core and associate Crew, we have considerable experience in assessing carer capacity to change in respect of domestic abuse, substance abuse and neglect, and carer capacity to meet children's needs considering the impact of mental health diagnoses, disability, or trauma on both the proposed carers and/or the child(ren). All our Children & Family Social Work practitioners have considerable experience in completing assessments, preparing court reports, and giving evidence where required

Safeguarding Adult Enquiries & Services

As a provider of a range of safeguarding specific CPD and practice services, we keep ourselves current by providing independent enquiry officer and review services.

For enquiries that require a critical review or an independent lead officer, we might just be your guys.

We pride ourselves on delivering rights-based, defensible, and person-centered services. Reflecting the MSP and MCA principles in all our practice and delivering expertise in the assessment and management of the complexities between autonomy and protection that are often central to safeguarding adult issues and concerns.

Independent Safeguarding Adult Review (SARs) Authors

Last but certainly not least, several of our Crew have experience in both individual and thematic SAR analysis and review.

Independent Advocacy

Our associate Kane came to us last year, he brings 16 years of advocacy practice experience and is current working with us on our 'community DoL' projects. Kane is also going to be preparing our advocacy training materials and working with Daisy on running these courses.

The underpinning principles of the [Advocacy Charter](#), and the interface between those and our inclusionary 'social work' values, should work cohesively and synergistically; however, at times advocacy has been perceived as a separate framework with competing functions.

As statutory advocacy has been strengthened by legislation and practice expectations, it is important that we develop and maintain constructive approaches and strategies.





After all, we are all trying to achieve the best outcomes for the relevant person.

References for practice consultancy in all our areas of expertise can be provided on request.

All our Social Work Crew are fully registered, current in their CPD, supervision and accreditations and hold additional qualifications in their areas of practice.

Want to find out more about what we can offer your service? Contact us in the usual ways for an informal discussion.



Motivational Interviewing: Our Regular Update

We know we keep revisiting this one, but it really is a good tool, and we are really excited about some of the work we are doing with several authorities.

In the first edition of our new look newsletter ([September 2021](#)) we introduced the approach and ideas around it, in the second ([December 2021](#)), we explored this a bit more and considered some of the benefits of its use within children and families' social care.

In this edition we thought we'd each share with you a little bit about why we are such advocates of the approach, and how it can benefit across all areas of social work.

Role play isn't a dirty word in our world, although we tend to call it 'skills practice' so we don't scare people - language is everything after all!

So, now for a little update, firstly from our Children's lead, Chloe Whittall, one of the DCC-i Directors, on what we've been up to in relation to MI skills development.

MI in Children & Families Practice

On Thursday 24th February 2022 we launched our MI Programme for Kent Children's Social Care – over the next 18 months we will be training over a 1000 staff including business support staff, practitioners from all teams, managers, and champions. We kicked it off by presenting the vision for the programme to 125 staff from across the directorate. This programme goes one step further than training, we have designed a super swanky slick e-learning programme that's interesting! If you are doubting us, we have managed to get The Simpsons, Kung Fu Panda, Sesame Street, and Inside Out into it and they are all relevant!





The package supports learners to develop baseline knowledge, (tested by a range of quizzes and activities), prior to the classroom sessions, which then means in the classroom the focus can be on practice skills and application.

We should also probably mention that the package is narrated by Dave the Carrot, it's a theme we are developing.... bear with us, it will make sense eventually 😊

Introducing 'Dave the Carrot' #WWDD

If you remember the [Garden Gang](#) (for the over 40's) or the [Munch Bunch](#) (for the under 40s) you'll get the idea. 😊



Anyway, back to the MI Programme... The courses we have developed are tailored to several audiences - from Business Support to Front Door Services and Long-Term Teams – each with their own set of tools and resources to go back to that are useful for their specific roles.

We are also developing a Champion programme, a sort of train-the-trainer option. We are quite excited about this bit. The Champions will get the opportunity to co-facilitate with our experienced trainers, and we are also doing an evaluation that includes measuring the impact and effectiveness of the training with families, not just whether staff enjoyed it or not!

What made the Kent launch really special was the involvement of the Kent Participation Team – a fantastic group of Apprentices with lived experience of care.

A huge shout out and thank you to Rob, Nathan, Charmaine, and Kayleigh who, alongside other young people, made us an amazing video about their good and bad experiences, of having professionals try to engage them, and why they think MI would be a good thing for Kent. You can watch the video here:



Motivational Interviewing



Everyone agreed that it connected everyone with the reason for doing this job...to give every child and young person the opportunity to thrive not just survive. The young people highlighted the sad statistic that only 6% of care leavers go to university (compared to 43% of other young adults).

Their vision for our programme is that Motivational Interviewing could make a difference to that figure, both by intervening with families to reduce the number of children becoming looked after, and by maximising the opportunities to all young people.

If you are interested in boosting the effectiveness of the training we do for you with an [e-learning package](#), or you have a participation group who would like to get [involved in designing or delivering](#) part of the training we do, or you would like to [commission evaluations](#) – [please get in touch](#).





Ask Russ #DJRuss

Our regular slot from DCC-i's Deputy Director of Operations and resident #Technerd and #DJ, Russ Long.

So, what tips do have you got for us this time Russ?



"Well, here we are 2 years on from the 1st Lockdown and Virtual Training on MS Teams is here to stay. Since we first started delivering online, we have learnt a thing or 3 here at DCC-i, don't forget we are as new to this as you are, we just spend more time on Teams, probably more than Microsoft itself!

The biggest thing we have learnt is that the quality of the UK's internet can vary, dramatically, as can the equipment that you've been issued with to run all this technical wizardry, that leads me on nicely to this month's Tech Talk.

I'm sure you, or someone you know has issues with their laptop melting halfway through a Teams meeting or joining a meeting and having to keep your camera off because it causes connection issues.

Some of this can be caused by your internet/wi-fi signal but can be helped by the following: -

- ✚ *Make sure you have all non-essential Windows closed (not just minimised), once you are in the Teams session you can then close all other Windows, like email and any non-essential internet/Word/Excel windows etc.*

- ✚ *Turn off GPU Acceleration, this isn't as scary and hard as it sounds. This simple video shows how to do this and it really does work! [Click here to watch the video](#)*
- ✚ *Updates!! These are so important to check regularly or set your updates to happen out of working hours ([How to change Windows Update timings](#)). To check for Updates, take a look at this link – [Where to Find Windows Updates](#)*
- ✚ *System Requirements for the Desktop App – It's great that we have these tools, but is your hardware capable of running it properly, these are the basic requirements for running MS Teams – A 2 Core CPU Processor running at 1.1GHZ or faster (4 Core recommended), 4Gb of RAM (Memory not Hard drive space), Windows 8.1 or higher or Windows Server (2012r2, 2016 and 2019), USB 2.0 Camera or standard laptop camera, microphone and speakers. [How to find your machines specifications](#)*
- ✚ *Background Effects require Windows 10 or later and will put extra pressure on the Teams Desktop."*

Have a question (or jukebox request) for our resident #DJ and #TechNerd, then contact him in the usual way
support@dcc-i.co.uk

