

NEWS

Systems more British Leyland than Toyota say social workers

If there's one thing everyone can agree on, it's the need for relationship-based social work.

But the question is how well set up are systems to make it happen? For many social workers the answer is 'not very'. One hurdle highlighted is the splitting of work into specialist teams, each with their own remit and group of people they work with.

Tina Shaw, who has spent more than 30 years working in children's services, said: "Workers come and go for a variety of perfectly valid personal and work-related reasons. This is unavoidable.

"What is avoidable is the frequent changes of personnel caused by the culture of breaking tasks down into being handled by different teams. A child could be meeting the worker from the duty team, the assessment team, the short-term team, the child protection team, the child in need team and the looked after team."

Edward Darcy, a social worker with 40 years experience, says there is a "conflict" between talking about relationship-based social work and such division.

"We know relationship-based practice with assessment skills are the most effective way to work with families to begin and sustain change.

"But local authorities often have systems that suit their needs not systems that meet the needs of children and families.

"Within that we have brilliant social workers doing fantastic work – that is not because of the system but in spite of it."

Darcy uses a car manufacturing analogy to illustrate the point.

"Our system is very much around the British Leyland approach as opposed to Toyota.

"British Leyland was famous for when a car was on track problems were passed on to the next person along the track. So when the car came out of the showroom a lot of time was spent fixing problems.

"Toyota was about never pushing on a problem. If you pushed on a problem it went back to where it came from so you get a car that is reliable when



it comes off the track. We talk about 'frontloading' families, but people will often push a case on before that work has been done."

As a result, says Darcy, "you are building a care plan based on sand".

He added: "When people are so under-resourced and stressed out it is completely understandable they push things on. If you have 50 cases and you can only handle 40 you have to get shot of those ten. That culture has to change."

How to make it relationship-based – page 23

Engaging with extremists in digital space

Social workers are being employed to intervene online with far-right extremists and talk them away from committing hate crime.

They have been recruited by London-based Moonshot CVE, a social enterprise consultancy specialising in using technology to disrupt violent extremism.

Moonshot CVE's co-founder Vidhya Ramalingam said: "We employ teams of social workers to start conversations with people online and turn them away from violence."

The company says it is monitoring the effectiveness of social work interventions.

Registration of EU staff will be safe – Hancock

Health and social care workers from other EU countries will have their qualifications and registration recognised in the UK regardless of the Brexit outcome, health secretary Matt Hancock announced.

New legislation means health and care workers who qualified in the EU will have their training recognised by the UK's regulatory bodies.

Corrections

In a book review of *We can work it out* by Frankie Hudson in April's edition the reviewer's name Nick Stephenson was missing. A news piece on a social media study should have said the work was led by University of Birmingham researchers. We are happy to correct this.

QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"I wholeheartedly agree with the need of social prescribing. Just do not invent new names for the most adequate professional to administer this. Use the social workers you already have."

Medical social worker Diana Burgui-Murúa in the British Medical Journal