

So...

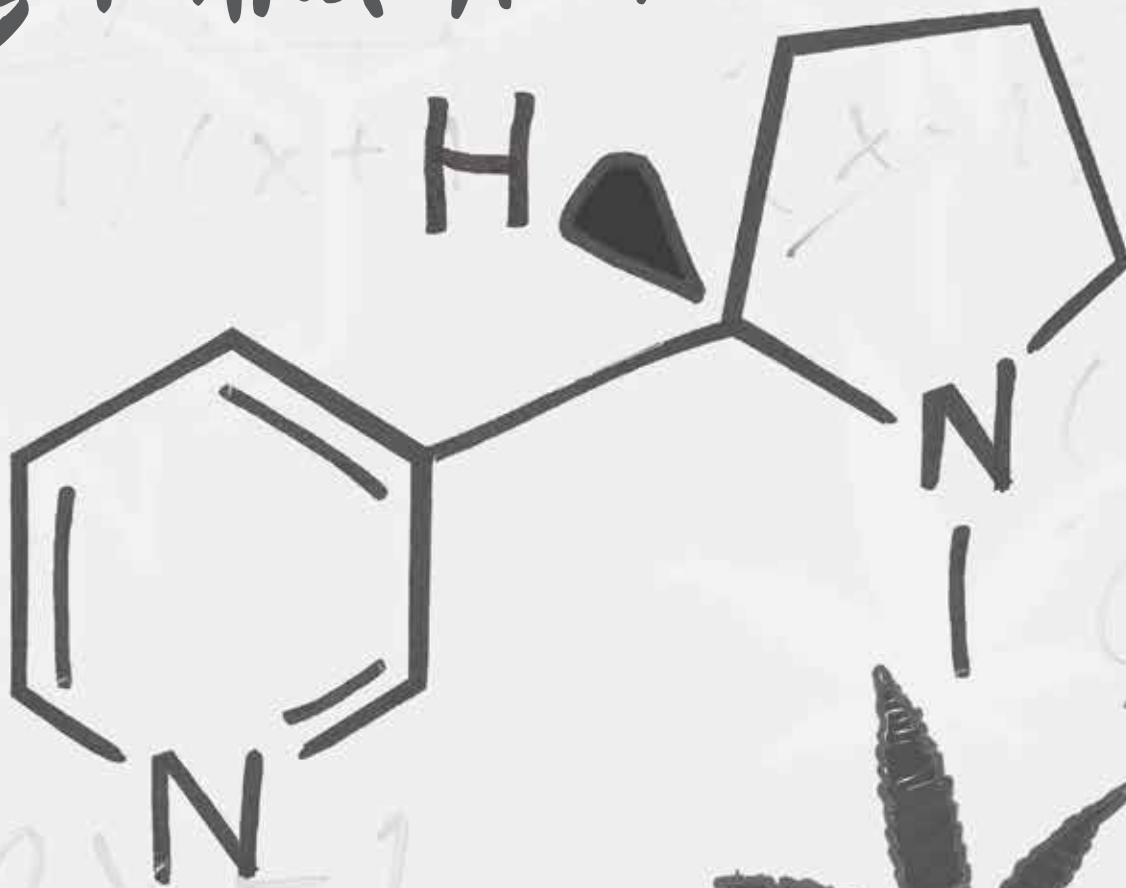
SPRING/SUMMER 2014

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES MAGAZINE

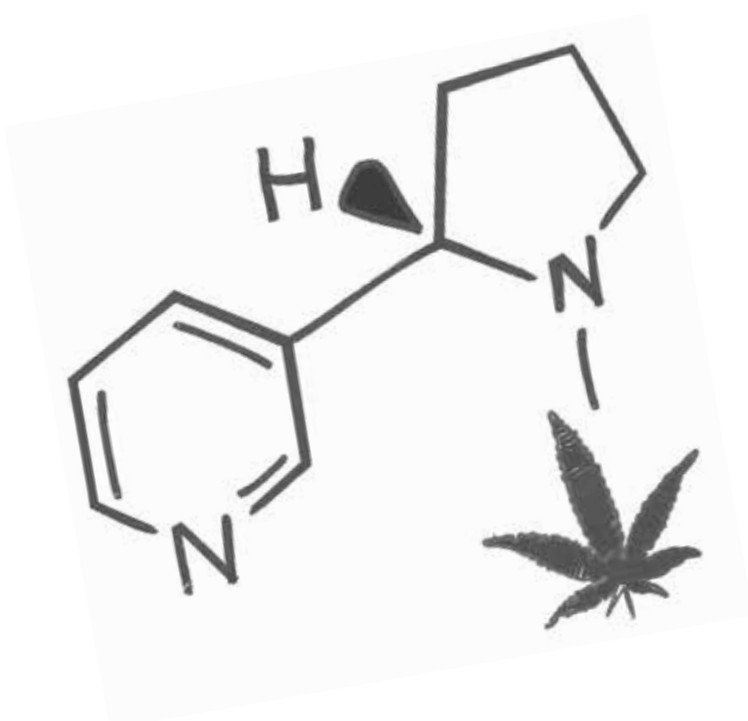
NOTTINGHAM
TRENT UNIVERSITY

NTU

ARE YOUNG PEOPLE GETTING A FAIR DEAL?



**YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUBSTANCE USE:
A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE**



So...

THE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES MAGAZINE • SPRING/SUMMER 2014

The media has often been accused of spreading myths about young people and drug abuse, crime and violence over recent years. Certainly the media and the tabloid press in particular are preoccupied with the notion that all young people are a danger to their communities.

The coverage young people often receive is biased, and on the whole unfair. For example, a 2004 study by MORI found the majority of articles from a mix of tabloid, broadsheet and local papers offered negative perspectives on young people and their activities.

This edition of **So...** will showcase research and current trends of thought on the Youth of Today from both our students and staff, and moves away from what we normally see in the press.

Our front cover article looks at young people and substance misuse from a local perspective and how misuse services are being used and developed for children, teenagers and adults.

There is also an article encouraging care leavers into higher education, as well as the impact of social media on today's youth and finally the new difficulties young people face and the services needed to support them.

Welcome from the Dean



The next weeks and months are some of the busiest for our students and staff.

For our students the next term will involve many hours in the library studying for the exams they will sit and the essays they will submit. Academic staff will also be busy supporting students through this process and marking the many assignments and exams which demonstrate our students' hard work and achievement.

This edition of the magazine will focus on the 'Youth of Today': a wide-ranging issue covering many aspects of society. This particular edition will look at young people and substance use; care leavers and higher education; and young people and the risks of using digital technology.

Alongside all of this, you'll also find impressive stories and achievements of our students and staff, details of important events including our career events and the usual updates on the activity that is going on within the School.

Kathie Moore

Dean of the School of Social Sciences

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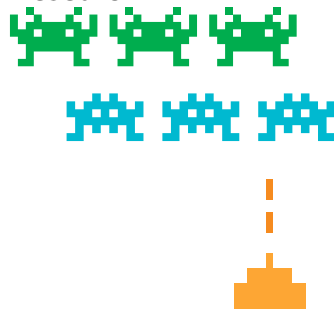
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So... Do you want to be a contributor?

If you are a School of Social Sciences student or member of staff and would like to feature in a future edition of **So...** then contact the Marketing Team on s3.enquiries@ntu.ac.uk.

Events Calendar 2014

Upcoming key events for your diary. These dates are not to be missed!

April

10

Relocation, Continuity and Transformation in Middle East-Asia Relations (MENA Conference 2014)

A one day interdisciplinary conference to explore the implications of change and transformation in MENA.

16

Guest Lecture – Can Prisons Reduce Reoffending?

Dr Ruth Mann, Forensic Psychologist at the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), where she is the Head of Evidence for the NOMS Commissioning Strategies Group.

16

Succeed with Social Sciences

Careers in Health for a Social Scientist.

30

NTUs Showcase

Showcase of the huge variety of business and professional services we offer.

30

Politics and International Relations Seminar Series

A Tacit Alliance: The Political Economy of Chinese-Iranian Relations.

May

6

Eco-logics: Ethics, Politics, Art Workshop

This workshop draws together an interdisciplinary field of academics and artists who find themselves engaged with questions concerning our relation to 'nature' and the nature of relationality.

June

11

Postgraduate and Professional Open Evening

Speak to our lecturers and find out about our postgraduate and professional courses.

For further information on all our events please visit www.ntu.ac.uk/s3events

Students pick up School awards for their outstanding achievements

Students from the School of Social Sciences were awarded for their recent achievements at a mid-year awards ceremony held by Kathie Moore, the Dean of the School of Social Sciences.

Four students were awarded, including Freya Nash and Robert Wilding, who completed research over the summer as part of the School's SPUR Studentship for the Emergency Services Research Unit (ESRU) on social media and fire safety.

Freya and Robert's award was for their work on a poster, which they developed as part of their SPUR work. They won 'Best Poster' sponsored by Gore Research and Fire Magazine at the Fire-Related Research and Development Conference. Freya and Robert won the award and £250 which they split equally between them.

Other awards included the Sage Essential Psychology Awards for Outstanding Achievements.

These awards are sponsored by the Division of Psychology, and are funded by the royalties of the co-authored introductory textbook 'Essential Psychology' that the division produced a few ago.

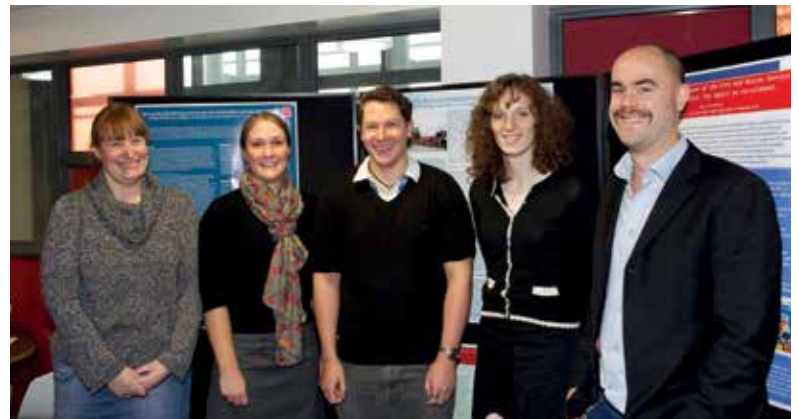
The Sage Essential Psychology Awards for Outstanding Achievements is awarded to one student from Year One and Year Two, who have made the

most significant improvements throughout the academic year. The prize is a certificate and a cheque for £50. Catherine Blackburn, a BSc (Hons) Psychology student, won the Year One award in recognition of her overall aggregate in her first year of study. And the Year Two award was presented to Holly Walton, a BSc (Hons) Psychology student, for her achievements throughout her second year.

Rowena Hill, commenting on the awards, said: "It's great to see our students rewarded for their efforts and hard work. We were very proud to award Catherine and Holly for consistently achieving high-quality work throughout their last year of study. These awards are a fantastic reflection of their successful engagement with their course.

"Then to hear that Freya and Robert had won the Best Poster prize from all the other entries at the conference was amazing. This award reflects their considered and thoughtful process over the summer through the SPUR work they completed with the Emergency Services Research Unit. It really is a pleasure to see them achieve and particularly impressive given that they were competing against established academics and fire researchers."

For a full list of student award winners visit: www.ntu.ac.uk/s3news



Wellbeing event

Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust (NHCT) and the School of Social Sciences jointly ran an event for students that focused upon the concept of 'Wellbeing'. The event explored the role of NHCT in promoting wellbeing and the interest that Social Scientists may have in this area, both from an academic perspective as well as wellbeing being an important element of a range of careers in many healthcare settings.



The event was led by staff from the Trust's Training and Development team: Angela Pemberton, Tony Mitchell and Sharron Allen. They brought along a display that showcased the work of the Trust and also some interactive activities that powerfully demonstrated the challenges of supporting wellbeing with people living with mental illness. Nottingham Trent Volunteering, Nottingham CVS, NTU's Student Support Services and The Employability team also attended. There was much discussion and debate held over lunch, which promoted good social contacts – a key element of wellbeing!

Angela Pemberton said: "We were so overwhelmed by the number of students who attended, asked questions and showed such a lively and informed interest in mental health that we left feeling worn out, but thoroughly satisfied that the next generation of workers we met showed empathy and compassion to those with mental health needs."

The result was a really vibrant event that was attended by over 100 students from both undergraduate and postgraduate School of Social Sciences' courses.

One student said: "The event really opened up my eyes to mental health and wellbeing. I really enjoyed talking to staff from NHCT and gained a real insight into the support that they offer and the breadth of opportunities available within the sector."

The relationship between NHCT and the School of Social Sciences is set to grow and develop with several initiatives already underway including students from the School volunteering within the Trust, and Sociology students due to take part in small group projects. Angela Pemberton has already delivered sessions to BA (Hons) Health and Social Care students on approaches to care within mental health and is due to deliver further sessions this academic year.



Students taking part in interactive activities at our Succeed with Social Sciences 'well-being' event ran in partnership with Nottingham Health Care Trust.

Ann Allen, Associate Dean of the School of Social Sciences, said: "The School of Social Sciences was delighted to join forces with Nottinghamshire Healthcare Trust to raise awareness, and encourage reflection, about wellbeing. Wellbeing is an important issue for social scientists, as individuals, scholars, community members, and potential professionals. The event was a great success and, as well as being hugely informative, a really good time was had by all!"

Succeed with social sciences career events

All of our students and graduates are invited to a series of workshops specifically designed to help you realise your employment opportunities with a social sciences degree.

Our 'Careers in...' events have been extremely popular, helping students who want to develop a career in a specific area. Recent events have included 'Careers in...' law, politics, housing, working with young people, and support and guidance.



Find out more about our future events at: www.ntu.ac.uk/s3careers

Public Health students help raise awareness for World AIDS Day

A current student and alumnus of the MA Public Health course were recently involved with local charitable organisations in Nottingham, helping to raise awareness for World AIDS Day on 1 December 2013. Local MP Lilian Greenwood, Nottingham South and Shadow Transport Minister, met with the Terence Higgins Trust (THT) and the African Institute for Social Development (AISD) to learn about and support the work of both organisations, who support people living with or affected by HIV.

Current student Amdani Juma (MA Public Health) is the Partnership and Community Director at the AISD as well as the BME Health Promotion Officer at the Terence Higgins Trust in Nottingham. Also involved was alumnus Wendy Kasanga (BA (Hons)

Health and Social Care, 2012) who is currently working with THT in Nottingham.

Nottingham Just One Centre was designated during European and National HIV Testing Week (22 - 29 November) for rapid testing using the INSTI HIV test and has strong links to the global World AIDS Day.



ARE YOUNG PEOPLE GETTING A FAIR DEAL?

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SUBSTANCE USE: A LOCAL PERSPECTIVE

In 2012, staff in the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice, including Adam Barnard, Claire de Motte, Di Bailey, David Ellicott, Lianne Kerlin and Sheilagh Resnick, were commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council to provide analytical support to substance misuse services for young people across the county. The research team developed a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) that focused on drug and alcohol use by children and young people within Nottinghamshire.

Key themes from 17 qualitative interviews with young people illustrated that the youth of today lead extremely complex lives that contribute to their substance misuse behaviour;

specifically the difficulties in managing day-to-day life and the relationship between mental health and substance misuse. Findings supporting the relationship between mental health and substance misuse include one service user who discussed mental health needs as a motivating factor for substance use. Substances were also often the cause of mental health symptoms.

Explanations for young people using substances often focused around a general notion of curiosity and desire to understand the feelings or sensations experienced when using substances. Other reasons for substance use included peers using and wishing to be inclusive of a social group. Yet the most common reason for substance use was often the mundaneness of daily life, with ordinary routine a strong motivating factor that increased their risk of substance use.

"If I'm bored and got nothing to do I'll just do it. It gives me an adrenaline rush, a bit of a buzz."

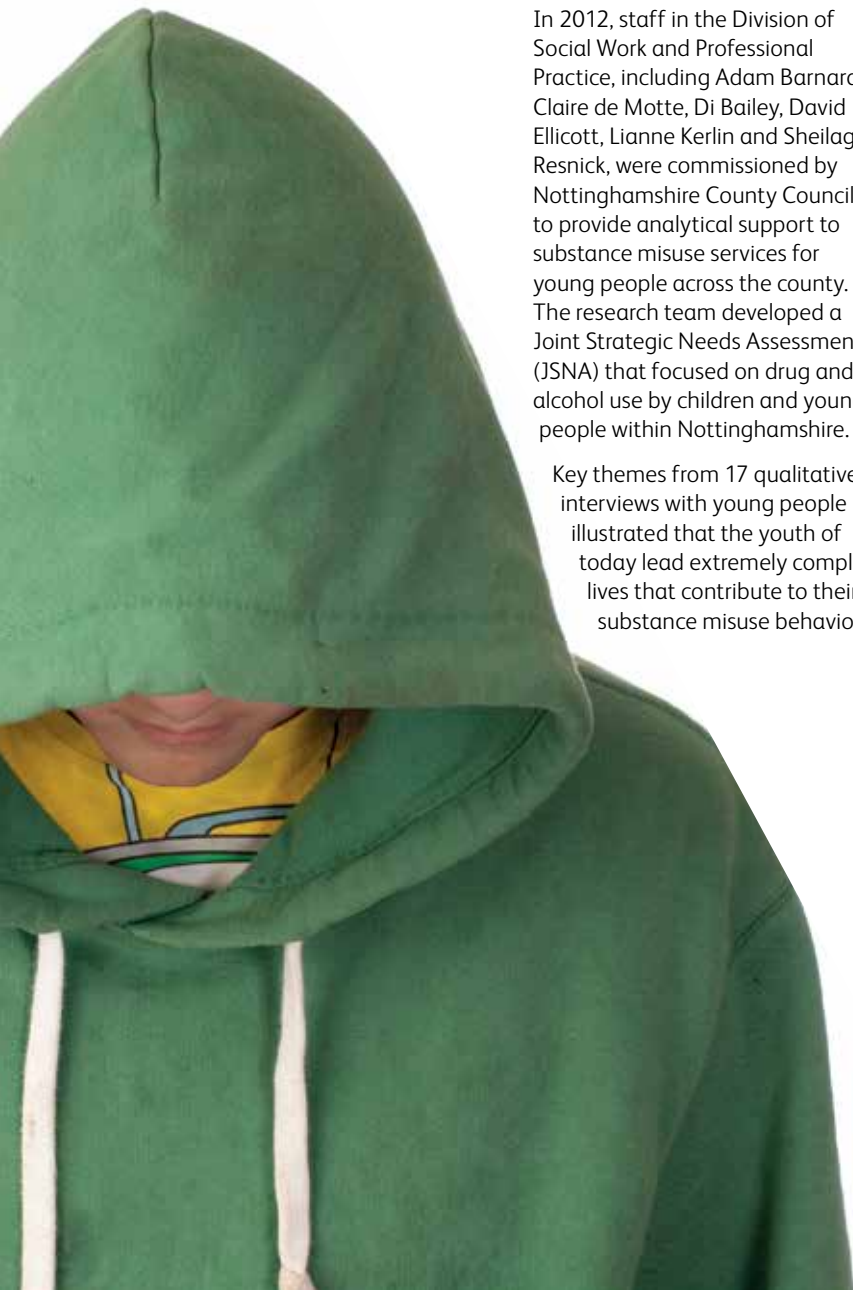
This 'buzz' or reduction in boredom related to feelings of having control of their own life and daily activities, supported by young people's frequent reporting of positive behavioural or emotional changes when they are

under the influence of a particular substance. Accounts from young people included feeling 'more confident' and able to manage social situations more positively.

A social situation that young people disclosed 'managing better' when using substances was when they attended school. One young person disclosed using substances every day and would not attend school unless they were under the influence. The input from schools and teachers appeared to be minimal, with teachers often 'turning a blind eye'.

Further complexities of young people's lives were revealed in their social support network. Rather than the support of family and friends having a positive influence on young people's lives, negative and turbulent relationships with family and friends actually led to increased substance use and self-harm.

Where young people often gained a strong social support network was through Nottingham County Council's youth workers or substance use workers provided from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) or Targeted Support teams. These relationships were a protective factor that reduced the young person's likelihood of





“I’d do it on my own if I had to, I didn’t need to be with my mates”.

using substances. They were built around the advice given by staff and conversations with the young people, typified by a neutral stance in power status, eliminating the ‘worker’ and ‘service user’ divide.

The young people interviewed appeared to appreciate the more democratic and empowered approach of their workers and valued their advice regarding safe practices when using substances: “They just try and advise us.

They don’t try and tell us stop, ‘cause they know that people are not going to stop.”

Following the success of the JSNA, the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice and Nottinghamshire County Council are working collaboratively on a Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP), funded by the Council and the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC).

The project will focus on early-help services using Participatory Action Research to include children and young people alongside service providers, parents and stakeholders in the design and delivery of the project. This innovative approach fits the Council’s inclusive service delivery by empowering people who use services to have a ‘voice’ in how these are designed and delivered in the future. For more information about either the project

with substance misuse services for children and young people or the KTP study, contact Adam Barnard adam.barnard@ntu.ac.uk.

Claire de Motte
Doctoral Researcher

Di Bailey
Academic Team Leader for the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice.

Care leavers and higher education

Edward Timpson, the Department for Education's Minister for Children, visited Nottinghamshire last December to launch the new Care Leavers' Charter with Nottinghamshire County Council in Westfield Folkhouse Young People's Centre in Mansfield. Angela Vesey, Lecturer in the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice, was invited to accompany one of our undergraduates from the School of Social Sciences, who, as a care leaver, had been invited to meet the Children's Minister to sign the new Charter on behalf of all care leavers in Nottinghamshire.

Angela said: "I was honoured to be able to accompany one of our NTU undergraduates to sign this new Charter, as I know that as a care leaver, she belongs to one of the most under-represented groups in higher education in the UK and making a transition to university is a significant personal and educational achievement for her."

In 2011, just 6% of care leavers entered higher education in the UK, dramatically lower than the 35% of the general population.

Barnardo's describe the key aim of the Care Leavers' Charter as "reinforcing the Government's commitment as corporate parent, to remind local authorities of the principles to be guided by when working with care leavers and to raise aspiration and understanding of what care leavers need".

Angela believes that the Charter is a significant step in the right direction, clearly articulating six key principles of support for care leavers around the themes of: fostering individual identity and aspiration; listening to care leavers' views; providing practical, financial, and emotional support; supplying relevant and timely information; finding care leavers a home; and working with other services.

However she reflects that while no one would dispute the underlying ethics upon which these principles are based, the reality for service providers may be rather more challenging. For example, it has been noted that the Charter pledges to prepare care leavers for independent living but only when they 'are ready'. For many care leavers this would mean staying in care beyond 18, 21, or even later. This may present significant financial challenges for local authorities who are themselves experiencing austerity measures, just when the number of children coming into care continues to rise by around 5% a year.

Barnardo's broadly welcomes the Charter "as an essential reminder of how we must think about and treat care leavers" but also expresses concerns that service providers cannot "magic up" resources that are simply not available. It also points to the lack of consistency of provision for care leavers across

local authorities as "a grave concern" and an issue which clearly needs to be addressed.

However, it is Janet Rich, trustee of the Care Leavers' Foundation, who makes the most pertinent point for us in higher education, when she reminds us that: "The message within the Charter from the young people is that any professionals – directors of children's services, university admissions tutors or frontline workers – are all massively influential. We are all part of the corporate parenting machine."

NTU clearly has a vital role to play in raising the aspirations of all our young people and in supporting as much as possible the successful transition of care leavers to education and subsequent employment.

Angela Vesey

Lecturer in the Division of Social Work and Professional Practice



Young people and the risks of using digital technology



Technology and social media have a huge impact on all of our lives. More so than ever before, we are now constantly in contact with, and contactable by, others. Young people represent one of the biggest groups of social media and technology users. The results of the most recent annual survey by Ofcom suggest that, whilst 12 to 15-year-olds may be less likely to use social media compared to previous years, young people are more likely to use smart phones to access technology (Ofcom, October 2013).

Smart phones are evolving so that their capabilities are increasing, affording us unlimited, and to some extent unprecedented, access to social media. Of course whilst this constant contact has many benefits for us such as maintaining social networks, facilitating knowledge acquisition, and allowing us to complete many day-to-day activities (e.g. online banking, shopping etc.), there are also potential risks associated with using digital technology. One such risk is that

the technology can be used as a medium through which individuals can engage in antisocial behaviour or bullying behaviours directed at others.

The survey by Ofcom found that females aged between 12 and 15 years old reported being at greater risk online. For example, approximately half of those females asked reported that they knew of someone who had had a negative experience whilst using technology either in the form of online bullying, gossip being spread, or embarrassing images being shared with others. However, whilst nearly half of all females asked said that they were aware of negative events happening, only one in five females reported that they had personal experience of such a negative event. In comparison to face-to-face bullying and gossip, the experience of encountering such events through digital means can be regarded as unique. For example, compared to face-to-face experiences, such events carried out through digital means are likely to be

carried out by an individual who is anonymous, at any time of the day or night, and may be more relentless in nature.

Whilst the data represents one perspective of the potential risks that young people may encounter when they use digital technology, some would argue it is hard to know whether these figures fully represent the true picture. We know, for example, that when asked to provide self-reports of experiences, social desirability can influence the results. In other words, young people may report what they think they should report or provide responses that will portray them in a particular way to others. Further, there is evidence that respondents may under-report negative experiences involving digital technology because of the fear of a reduction or total loss of their access to the technology. However, there is growing research evidence that experiencing negative events such as cyber bullying can have long-term consequences impact on an individual's psychosocial adjustment

and wellbeing. Consequently, a number of educational practitioners and researchers have developed guidelines for parents, teachers, and young people with regard to how to deal with negative events encountered online. These recommendations include: blocking usernames, changing usernames, not disclosing personal information, and involving appropriate adults (Wolfsebrg, 2006). Enhancing young people's awareness of such strategies may be one way to ameliorate some of the potential risks of using digital technology.

Dr Lucy Betts

Lecturer in the Division of Psychology

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Ofcom (October 2013). Children and parents: Media use and attitude report. Available at: <http://stakeholders.ofcom.org.uk/binaries/research/media-literacy/october-2013/research07Oct2013.pdf>

Wolfsebrg, J. S. (2006). Student safety from cyberbullies, in chat rooms and in instant messaging. *Education Digest*, 72, 33-37.

Should we be concerned about young children's use of IT?

Professor Mark Griffiths discusses recent research and what it could mean

Recently there has been a lot of media coverage on young children's use of IT, in particular recent research conducted by the US pressure group Common Sense Media and electronic learning experts VTech. Based on a survey of 1,463 parents of children aged under eight, it was reported that 38% of children aged under two years of age had used iPhones and/or Kindles for playing games or watching films.

The study, called 'Zero to Eight: Children's Media Use in America, 2013' also reported that one in three young children use a mobile phone or tablet before they can talk; 29% of children started using electronic gadgets as toddlers; children under two spent an average of 15 minutes a day using electronic gadgets; and that children between two and four spent an average of two hours a day watching television.

research projects all claiming to give pointers as to the long-term effects of children spending more and more time in front of the screen.

A decade ago, eminent psychologists made the observation that there had

"I have always argued that engaging with technology is OK for children in moderation, but that excess involvement with all things electronic may have a downside."

been a dramatic increase in shyness rates, a doubling of children's obesity levels, and that children were spending less time involved in physical activities – such as sports – than they used to. I cannot put all the blame for these observations at the door of IT developments, but I do think they can sometimes play a contributory role.

There appears to be a movement that automatically views IT as the way forward on lots of things, particularly in education, and that the only way of self-betterment amongst our children is through increasing IT use.

Whilst the issues are not from the IT medium itself but from what children can do in that medium – for instance access pornography or gamble at virtual casinos on the internet. Ultimately, there needs to be integration between lots of different activities – IT use, traditional

"I cannot put all the blame for these observations at the door of IT developments, but I do think they can sometimes play a contributory role."

education, physical education, and social skills development – as this more 'balanced' diet of activities will form a richer experience for the children of tomorrow.

Dr Mark Griffiths
Professor of Gambling Studies for the Division of Psychology

"29% of children started using electronic gadgets as toddlers; children under two spent an average of 15 minutes a day using electronic gadgets."

Are these findings a cause for concern?

I have always argued that engaging with technology is OK for children in moderation, but that excess involvement with all things electronic may have a downside. To me this seems little more than common sense. Over the last decade there have been countless independent



Why we should care more about youth services

Growing up today presents numerous opportunities and challenges that bear little semblance to the experiences of previous generations. The rapid pace of technological change offers just one example of how differently young people learn, engage with their peers and interact with the world around them. Similarly, the right for children to participate in decisions that affect their lives has seen unprecedented improvements over the past two decades.

Yet, there is much evidence to suggest it can sometimes also be very difficult being a young person today. In the UK, young people's subjective wellbeing is significantly lower than in other comparable countries. This means that young people in the UK are generally less happy, less content and less positive about their future than in other countries. British children are less likely to participate in active and creative pursuits than in other countries and families are "pushed to find the time their children want, something exacerbated by the uncertainty about the rules and roles operating within the family household" (IPSOS MORI 2011). The Children's Society found that low wellbeing increases dramatically with age – doubling from the age of 10 (7%) to the age of 15 (14%) and that children who have low levels of happiness are much less likely to enjoy being at home with their family, feel safe when with their friends, like the way they look and feel positive about their future (Children's Society 2012).

Why might this be so? Some argue that young people today are victims of excessive "regulation, over testing, incarceration and exclusion" resulting in a lack of trust in "young people's capacity to grow up independently of intensive surveillance and support" (Wood 2010: 50-51). The negative framing of young people by government policy announcements

is coupled with an intensive media focus on young people as problems. There is also evidence to suggest that increased generalised fear and insecurity in society has intensified our efforts to 'protect' children. Fewer children take positive risks, build relationships and play outside, with their wellbeing suffering as a result.

All of this might make us think about the ways in which we can nurture a positive environment for young people to grow up in where they feel valued by others, experience things that extend their horizons and build meaningful and positive relationships with other young people and adults. One traditional response has been to develop something we call Youth Work, delivered through youth services.

Youth Work has a long and interesting history, having first emerged in the UK through the work of churches and organisations such as the newly established YMCA in 1844. By the 1960s, concern with the social and moral character of young people led to the expansion of state youth work, with an emerging professional workforce and a statutory youth service. Between the 1960s and the late 1990s, much of this youth work sat between being an educational service and a leisure one – seeking to develop young people outside of the formal school curriculum. During the New Labour years (1997-2010), various reforms led to a greater focus on addressing the problems presented or faced by young people and Youth Workers found themselves engaged in preventative work, structured and accredited leisure time provision as well as playing a key role in the provision of advice and information to young people.

As a result of the global financial crisis that took hold in 2008, youth services face an unprecedented set of challenges. The sustained

period of economic difficulty has seen average cuts to youth services at 27%, with some local authorities cutting their youth service budgets completely. This has led to vulnerability in provision for young people, and unlike the closure of schools, hospitals or libraries, attracts little interest outside of those closely connected to the work.

This is perhaps unsurprising since many of us may wonder whether Youth Work is worth investing in. We were right in not fully understanding how it makes a contribution to young people's lives and what it actually does with young people!

Youth work utilises informal and non-formal education to "facilitate [young people's] personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, a place in society and to reach their full potential". Young people value youth workers firstly because they are trusted adults. A youth worker acts as a "role model" to young people and as a "critical friend" is able to respect and relate to young people but with clear professional values and boundaries that guide interventions (Wood et al 2014).

Youth Work has been shown to make a valuable contribution to the lives of young people, especially when they are facing particular difficulties. The Education Select Committee found that "there is little doubt that good youth services can have a transformational effect on young people's lives and can play a vital role both in supporting vulnerable young people".

Much evidence shows that: youth work helps young people to be healthier through the promotion of healthy lifestyles and the use of effective health prevention work; youth work helps young people to stay safe through innovative prevention programmes and the promotion of resilience and

decision making skills; youth work often provides the only positive and intended opportunity for learning; youth work increases the opportunities for young people to make a positive contribution to their communities.

In the context of the challenges that young people face growing up today together with the evidence of low subjective wellbeing, it may be time to think afresh about how the government can support and invest in promoting positive activities and engagement for young people. To start with, central government needs to provide a much clearer legal expectation on local authorities to ensure the delivery of youth services. This in turn will enable local authorities to deliver and commission Youth Work that is relevant to the local young population. Involving young people in the process is also key: enabling them to have a greater say about what is needed in their local communities and how they can play an active role in responding to this need.

Youth service cuts will never attract the same press or public interest as those faced by other high profile and valued public services. Yet, if we are truly concerned about what kind of environment we want young people to grow up in, then arguing for a better Youth Work deal for young people is one step in the right direction.

Jason Pandya-Wood

Academic Team Leader for the Division of Sociology

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House of Commons Education Select Committee (2011), Para 39

National Occupational Standards for Youth Work

See the excellent review of evidence by McKee, V., Oldfield, C. and Poultry, J. (2010) *The Benefits of Youth Work*, London: Lifelong Learning UK/Unite the Union

While you're here...

Here is a reminder of all the things you could get involved in while you're here which will broaden your experience, help you stand out in the graduate job market and gain a range of skills that employers are looking for.

Get involved with a Social Sciences Society

Social Science related societies include Politics, International Relations, Sociology, Criminology and Forensics.

In this edition we introduce the Psychology Society

Nicknamed "PSYCH'D", the Psychology Society has over 100 members! Aimed at Psychology students the society provides support with getting involved in volunteering, creates networking opportunities and builds vital links between first year students and those further on in their degree. The society offers travelling opportunities such as, trips to London's Freud Museum and Amsterdam in order to

further explore places of acute psychological interest and visit different cultures.

The Society also offers a range of events which fulfill both the social and academic domains of their member's interests. Social events include the usual club nights as well as an eclectic mix of activities such as pub quiz nights, Quasar Lasar, ice skating and many more. Academic events include the seminar series, academic workshops, cross-divisional networking and other ways of broadening their members repertoire.

There are many exciting events coming up in PSYCH'D, but you can't attend if you're not a member. Sign up today on the Students' Union website www.trentstudents.org and get involved! If you wish to gather more information please contact the following email: NTUPSYCHD@gmail.com or find them on Facebook at: www.facebook.com/groups/ntuppsychology

Be a Student Academic Mentor!

If you're excelling academically and you love helping others, why not apply to become an Academic Mentor?

Student Academic Mentors are a team of second-year, final-year and postgraduate students, carefully selected and trained to help students with academic writing, study skills and to help improve maths.

It's a fantastic opportunity to help others, develop your own skills and earn a handy income of £8.71 per hour for four hours a week, planned around your studies. Find out more at: www.ntu.ac.uk/studentmentors

Benefits for you:

- Improved time management skills as you manage your work with being a mentor.
- Academic improvement. Being an Academic Mentor will give you the opportunity to reflect on your own work and identify areas you need to improve.
- Mentoring provides you will an employability edge as you can add the experience to your CV.



Members of the "PSYCH'D" Society include: Joshua Wick (Treasurer), Holly Robins (General Secretary), Katie Trigg (Vice President), Briony Triller (President).



Volunteering

What is Nottingham Trent Volunteering?

Nottingham Trent Volunteering is a joint venture between Nottingham Trent University and Nottingham Trent Students' Union, delivering a diverse range of high-quality volunteering opportunities for students. We have something for everybody.

Volunteering gives you loads of benefits, both personally and course-related, and can be a great way to meet new people and have fun. You will also get the satisfaction of knowing that you have done something really worthwhile in your local community during your time at University.



How do I get involved?

- **Sports volunteering** – Take part in what you enjoy and make a difference. You could be supporting PE lessons after school, delivering school sports clubs or coaching a local sports club.
- **One-day challenges** – Develop your organisational skills by taking part in projects led by students, for students. Projects so far have included conservation work, decorating hospitals and throwing a party for young carers.
- **Student led projects** – Develop your organisational skills and lead a project you are passionate about.
- **Community Projects** – Work with local organisations and build your personal skills and course-related experience.
- **International Volunteering** – Extend your experiences and your boundaries.

Social Sciences Students can attend a volunteer drop in at 3121 (Dean's break out area in Chaucer) on Tuesdays 10 am - 12 noon every week. Finally you can book appointments via email anytime during the week to see a member of the volunteering@ntu.ac.uk.

Students in Classrooms

Many Social Science Students have careers working with young children or teenagers. If this something that interest you then why not take up one on the 400 placements that are available in local schools, colleges and academies. Here are a few examples of the schemes you could get involved in.

Teacher Associate Scheme

Provide support in a local primary or secondary school classroom throughout the academic year. You can undertake activities such as helping groups of learners with class work, working on a one-to-one basis with learners to improve attainment and some non-teaching aspects such as planning and preparation. The scheme also aims to provide opportunities for students to raise learner aspirations towards Higher Education (HE) and to act as positive role models.

Inspire Mentoring Scheme

Support local secondary and post-16 learners as a mentor throughout the academic year by offering one-to-one guidance. The role of a mentor is not subject specific so opportunities are open to all subject areas.

Primary Literacy Scheme

Support local infant, junior and primary school pupils with their reading, writing, spelling and general literacy skills throughout the academic year.

Find out more at: www.ntu.ac.uk/studentsinclassrooms

So...

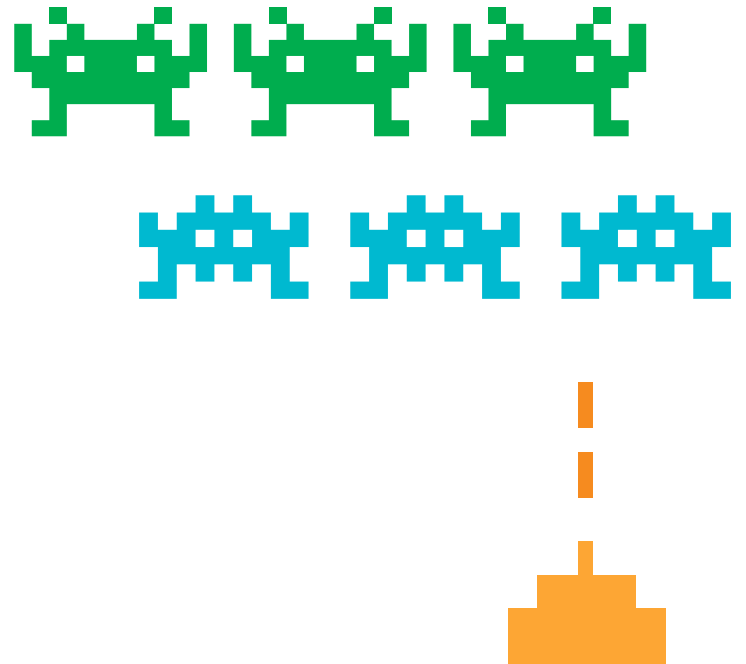
SOCIAL SCIENCES RESEARCH STUDIES

- Study shows how video gamers experience altered visual perceptions after playing



- University studies pick up prizes at fire research conference

- New study aims to avert an over-50's 'brain drain' for UK organisations



Study shows how video gamers experience altered visual perceptions after playing

Some video gamers experience altered visual perceptions after playing, new research has shown. The study, published in the International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction, has been carried out by experts in Nottingham Trent University's International Gaming Research Unit.

Led by psychologists Angelica Ortiz de Gortari and Professor Mark Griffiths, the research showed how some gamers reported distorted versions of real-world surroundings. Others saw video game images and misinterpreted real life objects after they had stopped playing. Gamers reported seeing video game menus popping up in front of their eyes when they were in a conversation, or saw coloured images and 'heads up' displays when driving on the motorway.

The study involved the analysis of 656 experiences from 483 gamers collected in 54 online video game forums.

This is the first of a series of studies that aims to identify, classify and explain 'Game Transfer Phenomena' (GTP) experiences via the different senses: sight, sound and touch. GTP research focuses on gamers' perceptions, cognitions and behaviours influenced by video game playing and aims to further understanding of the psychosocial implications of altered perceptions induced by virtual technologies.

Visual illusions can easily trick the brain and staring at visual stimuli can cause 'after-images' or 'ghost images'. The novelty of this new study, the researchers say, is that GTP were triggered by associations



between video game experiences and objects and activities in real life contexts. The findings also raise questions about the effects of the exposure to certain visual effects used in video games.

In some playing experiences, video game images appeared without awareness and control of the gamers and, in some cases, the images were uncomfortable, especially when gamers could not sleep or concentrate on something else. These experiences also resulted in irrational thoughts such as gamers questioning their own mental health, getting embarrassed or performing impulsive behaviours in social contexts. However, other gamers clearly thought that these experiences were fun and some even tried to induce them.

Angelica Ortiz de Gortari said: "Visual experiences identified in GTP show us the interplay of physiological, perceptual and cognitive mechanisms and the potential of learning with video games even without awareness.

It also invites us to reflect about the effects of prolonged exposure to synthetic stimuli and the challenges that the human mind affront due to the technological advances that are still to come."

The researchers point out that the data was collected in online video game forums, and therefore, the psychological profile of the gamers in the study is unknown.

However, different gamers reported similar experiences in the same games. This highlights the relevance

of the video games' structural characteristics but gamers' habits also appear to be crucial.

Professor Griffiths said: "Some gamers may be more susceptible than others to experience GTP. The effects of these experiences appear to be short lived, but some gamers experience them recurrently. More research is needed to understand the cognitive and psychological implications of GTP."

This study shows there is a need to investigate neural adaptations and after-effects induced by video game playing as a way of encouraging healthy and safe video game playing.



University studies pick up prizes at fire research conference

The modern classrooms of a leading university might not be easily associated with the difficult work of an emergency service – but Nottinghamshire Fire and Rescue Service (NFRS) and Nottingham Trent University have forged a life-saving and award-winning partnership.

Ground-breaking research and work that has resulted from the collaboration between NFRS and NTU has seen the organisations scoop an industry award recently

Two studies picked up the top two prizes at this year's Institute of Fire Engineers (IFE) Fire Related Research and Developments Conference (RE13) last month.

By working together, they are improving lives for people in the county right now and the on-going relationship should mean that those living, working and playing in

Nottinghamshire are protected by the best fire and rescue service for years to come.

International attention is now focused upon Nottinghamshire as fire and rescue services around the world are looking at the work as a template for how they might modernise to deal with the risks they face and protect their own communities.

NFRS' Area Manager Craig Parkin co-authored a paper – Fire and Rescue Service Reconfiguration: a case study in Nottinghamshire – with academics Peter Murphy and Kirsten Greenhalgh, which resulted from the work between the Service and the University. Craig said:

Peter Murphy from NTU saw value in working with the fire and rescue service as a research exercise.

“This is public and professional recognition for the efforts we are making to deliver the best possible service, and acknowledges that we have the communities' interests at heart and that we try to spend their money wisely.

“For the community, it will mean that we understand them better and will assist us in using what resources we have to help and support them as best we can – it's about making sure we do the right thing for them.”

The joint work started in 2010 with a review into the way NFRS firefighters, engines and stations are used to protect people, homes and businesses in the county. NTU was brought in to scrutinise and evaluate the fire cover review.

Peter Murphy from NTU saw value in working with the fire and rescue service as a research exercise. Peter said: “In the fire community, the change from measuring risk to people from the old way of looking at property means a much more effective service that protects the public better and allows the fire service to work better with other emergency services and partners to help achieve that.

“People won't see any difference and they shouldn't because we don't want them to worry – but they can be satisfied that the fire and rescue service is configured in the best possible way.

“What is particularly nice about the award is that it was not only given for the original piece of work which was based on real evidence and intelligence, it recognised what has been done over the last three or four years and how that initial piece of work has now had a huge impact on what service is given to the public.”

The second top prize was awarded to two psychology students from Nottingham Trent University's School of Social Sciences, who won the Best Poster award for their contributions to a scholarship project on fire safety and the use social media. Freya Nash and Robert Wilding undertook the project, which considered the utility of social media for delivering fire safety messages and to make recommendations for practice within that arena.

Both prizes were for research conducted by NTU's Emergency Services Research Unit and it is the first time that both prizes have been won by a single research unit.



“In the fire community, the change from measuring risk to people from the old way of looking at property means a much more effective service”.



New study aims to avert an over-50's 'brain drain' for UK organisations

Experts are looking to address a potential 'brain drain' of the UK's older workers as they head towards retirement. A major new study conducted by Nottingham Trent University will involve trying to find new ways to retain and re-motivate the over-50s in their final years of work, in a bid to prevent a loss of crucial knowledge, skills and experience.

Researchers know that some older workers start to lose enthusiasm for their job in their final years of employment and may even bring their retirement plans forward as a result. Now, as part of a three-year €1.1m study, they want to develop new strategies to help organisations re-engage with their older employees – a move which it is hoped will benefit both the business and the individual.

The EU-funded project – 'Workage: Active Ageing Through Work Ability' – is being carried out with the UK Work Organisation Network (UKWON). It is the first study of its kind and will involve working with a mix of public and private-sector organisations to look at workers' attitudes, their levels of engagement and their plans for retirement.

The research team will examine UK organisations' current policies for retaining and engaging older workers to see what is currently in place and what does and doesn't work. From here they will look at developing a series of new approaches, or 'interventions' for organisations to trial, and will monitor how successful they are at helping to engage workers and ultimately delaying their intention to retire.

These approaches may vary from business to business, depending on the size, structure, culture and type of organisation. They could include strategies such as improving or amending job design, improving team-working, greater opportunities for leadership and management development, and enhanced communication and participation in organisational projects.

It is hoped the study will significantly improve employee wellbeing, engagement and 'work ability' across the workforce, through smarter, more productive working. The researchers believe it could also lead to big savings for organisations in terms of not having to fund recruitment and retraining costs.

Dr Maria Karanika-Murray, from the Division of Psychology, said: "Often when people approach retirement they start to lose their enthusiasm for the job as they only have a few years left. But these people hold vital, irreplaceable skills and knowledge. We do not want to lose these individuals and their rich knowledge and skills base – they are crucial to successful organisations.

"We need to keep them fully engaged and keep their skills and knowledge for longer. Some companies are already doing this, but many are doing nothing at all. A lot of organisations do not understand that they can save money without losing skills and knowledge, and the key to engaging and retaining older workers is about adjusting to their needs."

Professor Peter Totterdill of UKWON, said: "How we work is the neglected part of the equation when policymakers and employers talk about retaining older workers, especially in the UK.

"If our knowledge, skills and experience are respected in our day-to-day jobs, if we are in a supportive team, if we come to work to improve the business rather than just do

our functional tasks, and if we are involved in the decisions that affect us, then we will feel good about our jobs and be more likely to postpone retirement."

At the end of the study a toolkit will be produced and information on good practice will be collated and made available to national policymakers throughout Europe. It will also be made available to employers so they can identify and pilot the most appropriate policies and programmes to retain and re-motivate their older workers.

The project also involves the Age and Employment Network; Nottinghamshire Employer First; Nottinghamshire Fit for Work Service; the Trades Union Congress; the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions; the Department for Work and Pensions; the Southern Health and Social Care Trust; and the Royal College of Midwives; as well as experts from Kingston University, Lancaster University and Tilburg University.

The project is funded by the European Union's Programme for Employment and Social Solidarity – PROGRESS.

What are our Alumni doing now?



Tracey Newcomb

Course: Social Work Studies
Employer: Doncaster Council
Job title: Head of Service

Please tell us what your current role involves?

"I have been in the role since February 2011 and I have strategic responsibility for a multi-agency children's assessment service. I have recently taken over the responsibility for early help services including children's centres, youth delivery and family support across the borough."

What is a typical day for you?

"I am responsible for all the children's safeguarding service where new referrals are received. I have developed a multi-agency service which has seen the police and health colocation with social workers. I spend most days liaising with strategic partners about its ongoing development."

Can you share details of how your career has developed since leaving NTU?

"Before I went on to complete my degree I had worked as a social work assistant for a number of years. After graduating I took up a qualified role and then after three years I moved on to being a Team Manager, Training and Development Officer training social workers. I then became Service Manager, managing a third of the city's social work resources. In 2005 I returned to Nottingham Trent Business School to do the Postgraduate Certificate in Public Services Management. In 2006 I took up the post of Head of Social Work in the city, and finally left the Council after 20 years in September last year after having a baby. In November last year I met the Managing Director of Barker Ross, a recruitment company. We had a shared vision around developing a model of agency staff provision

different to what is already on offer. In a climate where the public sector, in particular, has to rely on temporary staff, it is crucial that quality staff are available to them. I was asked if I would do some work with the company and I happily accepted. I was recruited to my current post in February 2011 to assist the developments needed in Doncaster."

Can you tell us about any challenges you face at work?

"Social work by its very nature is a challenging and stressful field to work in. You need to pull on all your resources to keep yourself positive. My most significant challenge along the way however has been working in the same place for so long. Whilst my corporate memory being huge was a real asset, I have always had to work that little bit harder to prove to parts of the workforce that I was worthy of the next move up. Lots of staff still

remembered me as a social work assistant! I overcame this by consistently demonstrating my commitment and enthusiasm and using my years of experience across a variety of roles to make the right changes and decisions and bringing the workforce along with me. I would like to think that at the point of leaving people respected that I had done that."

Do you have any advice for others?

"Social work is not easy. It is no longer just about 'helping people', you need to be very robust physically and emotionally. You need to be resourceful, able to work autonomously and under great pressure, and have good planning and prioritising skills. Keep abreast of new developments and don't think that your learning stops when you leave the university doors – social work is an ever-developing beast!"



Emily Macaulay

Course: BA (Hons) Criminology
Employer: Devon and Cornwall Police Authority

Job title: Policy Officer
 (consultation, community engagement and communications)

Please tell us what your role involves?

“Police Authorities across the country have faced unprecedented change as the governance model for policing faced its biggest reform since the 1960s. Police Authorities were abolished on 15 November 2012 when the public went to the polls and elected their first ever Police and Crime Commissioners. My role in assisting the delivery of this change was to inform the public, engage with them in conversations about the change and their priorities, and use this information to inform the change management programme.”

What is a typical day for you?

“Most days start with emails – these may be from colleagues in the Police Force, external criminal justice agencies or local authorities and may be asking questions or responding to requests. I’ll sort out some responses, discuss some with colleagues and then look to the tasks of the day. If it is an office-based day I may be working on our social media outlets, developing an e-newsletter or writing a paper for a project board meeting, informing decision making about future consultation. If it’s an out-and-about day I will be packing the car and heading out, with my team, to a community event where we will spend the day talking to the public about changes and consulting them on their priorities for policing. Engaging the community in the criminal justice system requires the effort of going to them – so my job can involve working during the day and at night.”

Can you share details of how your career has developed since leaving NTU?

“After NTU I moved back home in order to be able to fund postgraduate study and then moved to Devon to take a job in the Devon and Cornwall Constabulary. Two years later I was employed as a Project Manager for the Devon and Cornwall Criminal Justice Board to deliver the Community Justice project. When the funding for that post ended I moved to the Police Authority where I have been for three years.”

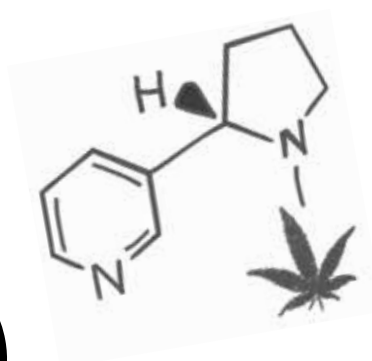
Join in.



Staff and students can join the NTU Alumni Association LinkedIn group.

If you are a current student this is a great platform to engage with alumni, and gain access to the vast network and experience our alumni have to offer.

So...



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