



Joe Mulholland

Senior Social Work Practitioner

Introduce yourself. Where do you work? What is your job role?

My name is Joe Mulholland, and I am 58 years old. I have been working as a Senior Social Work Practitioner since 2016 in the Acute Care @ Home Team. Prior to that, I worked as a Care Manager for nearly 10 years, and before that, I held the position of Senior Social Worker.

What does your job entail?

My job is diverse and sometimes open to interpretation. I frequently assess individuals for care packages and collaborate with other Social Workers in the community. I also facilitate the mentoring of medical students, paramedics, nurses, occupational therapists, and other healthcare professionals. In this role, I often emphasize the importance of good communication, encouraging them to engage with people on various levels and assist them through the changes they may be experiencing, along with their families. These changes can range from the need for care to supporting individuals at the end of life.

How did you get into this line of work?

Given the conclusion of my work in Care Management, I felt that joining the Acute Care @ Home Team provided me with an opportunity to contribute my own expertise to a developing service that required strong foundations in Social Work. My manager, who was a nurse, supported my growth in this role, and it has remained unchanged ever since. I believe that in other trusts, the exclusion of Social Work from their teams is an error in judgment. This omission hinders the ability to conduct holistic assessments, as Social Work brings a unique perspective and skill set that is crucial for comprehensive care.

Outline your career to date?

I started my professional career as a service engineer after completing a five-year apprenticeship in my mid-twenties. However, I eventually realised that I needed a change of direction and was fortunate enough to be given the opportunity to train as a Social Worker. During the initial three years after qualifying, I was fortunate to have the guidance of a wonderful Senior named Esther McCorry, who played a pivotal role in pushing me forward on my professional journey.

Tell us about your qualifications and training?

I have a degree in Social Work (SW) along with a post-qualification (PQ) ranging from PQ1 to PQ6. As a Social Worker, I have worked in Sensory Support, which has allowed me to develop skills in investigating childcare and adult abuse cases. Additionally, I have acquired proficiency in signing and have further enhanced my abilities by achieving Level 2 in British Sign Language (BSL) and Level 1 in Deaf Blind communication. I have obtained various qualifications in the field of Social Work and make it a priority to regularly update my accreditation. To ensure this, I undergo 90+ hours of training every three years to stay up to date with the latest developments in Social Work.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

Having excellent communication skills and the ability to engage effectively with families are essential attributes in my role. Additionally, I have developed the ability to collaborate with other professionals at a high level, including doctors, nurses, physiotherapists, pharmacists, and Speech and Language therapists, among others. These challenges have reinforced the importance of multidisciplinary team (MDT) working in my practice. I strongly believe in being a true advocate for the most vulnerable individuals. I hold a genuine sense of value in the work I do, and I hope that this shines through in my practice.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

My principles involve pursuing what is right and challenging what is wrong. Moreover, I firmly believe that giving is more rewarding than receiving. I have a deep passion for my work and find fulfilment in supporting those who are most in need. I recognize the importance of teamwork and actively seek the support and input of my colleagues, acknowledging the valuable contributions they bring to our shared goals.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

My life now is quite boring, walking, gardening and a general dog's body for people close to me in repairing and making things. In truth I enjoy physically making things.

Tell us an interesting fact about yourself?

When I was 22, I volunteered overseas for a year in Calcutta, India. During my time there, I worked in an orphanage and a home for the dying. I had the opportunity to work closely with individuals affected by leprosy and formed meaningful friendships with those who were considered destitute or "untouchables." Additionally, I took on the responsibility of managing the finances of a street clinic, which exposed me to individuals involved in exploiting others, including gang members.

Who has inspired you most in your life?

Many people, but one in particular stands out, Dr Jack Preger, whom I worked with. He was a selfless man who worked among the destitute and never sought favour or praise for his deeds. In his words "It is better to light one candle than to sit in the dark"

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Time shall come and time shall go, as do people, both good and bad. Try to look for the good in all and know that you're a good person and don't knock yourself too much. When I look at the 16-year-old I can say, you did ok.