



**Keelin
Cassidy**

Social Worker

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

My name is Keelin Cassidy, and I am a qualified social worker. I work in the Physical Health and Disability team within the Belfast Trust. Recently, I have been appointed as the Senior Social Work Practitioner.

What does your job entail?

I work in a social work-led team that provides support and services to those aged 18-65 years living in the Belfast area who have a range of physical health and disability needs, including Multiple Sclerosis, Motor Neurone Disease, and Alcohol-Related Brain Injury. My role is to carry out assessments with service users and carers with the goal of providing the right services that are appropriate to support their care needs.

How did you get into this line of work?

When I was in school, I had an interest in Speech and Language Therapy and Social Work. I decided to study Sociology at QUB (Queen's University Belfast). After completing my degree, I undertook a year-long counselling course and volunteered in various organisations, including the Samaritans, Belfast Traveller Support Group, and Save the Children. During my social work studies, I had two placements in children's services, but I always knew that my passion lay in adult services.

Outline your career to date?

I began my career in the NHSCT (Northern Health and Social Care Trust) as a social work trainee. I worked in hospital social work for a year before commencing my Bachelor of Social Work at QUB (Queen's University Belfast). After I qualified, I continued to work in the NHSCT for six years in the Older People's team. In 2013, I joined the Belfast Trust and have spent the last ten years working as a social worker in the Physical Health and Disability Service.

Tell us about your qualifications and training?

I have a BA (Hons) in Sociology from QUB (Queen's University Belfast) and then completed the 2-year accelerated Bachelor of Social Work from QUB. After I qualified, I completed the Specific Award in Social Work.

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

Having empathy, patience, compassion, and respect are key to good social work practice. Good communication skills, such as active listening and taking a person-centred approach, are essential. Other important attributes would include strong organisational skills in managing a complex caseload and having the courage to support positive risk-taking. It is also important to practice self-care as social work can be a challenging role.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

One of my favourite pieces of wisdom is from Julian of Norwich: 'All shall be well, and all shall be well, and all manner of thing shall be well.'

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I love spending time with my husband and four children. During lockdown, I completed the Couch to 5k program and have enjoyed running ever since.

Tell us an interesting fact about yourself?

I donated breast milk to the Human Milk Bank, which helped four babies in neonatal care.

Who has inspired you most in your life?

My parents have always been a source of strength and inspiration to me, especially juggling the challenges of being working parents.

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

I would tell myself to be brave, believe in myself, and not set limitations.