

Starfish Talent 20 – People

Starfish Search is passionate about spotting, supporting and developing talented officers with potential. In our second Talent 20 feature, we are delighted to place a spotlight on another twenty of our leaders of the future, this time focusing on children's and adult social care, education, communities and public health.

We were bowled over by the nominations submitted by local government leaders across the country, but the individuals highlighted stood out for their outstanding contributions together with their support, empathy and kindness. They are rightly recognised as the rising stars in their organisations and we look forward to hearing more about their achievements for years to come.

Starfish TALENT 20: People

Khizer Iqbal Practice Manager, Children's Social Care Rochdale Borough Council



In under five years Khizer has progressed from student social worker to practice manager. Along the way, he has been nominated for a prestigious children's services award and was Rochdale's Employee of the Year 2019. Khizer has impressed colleagues with his calm and respectful management style, often leading from the front with his clear vision. He has been described by colleagues as passionate, pioneering, keen to embrace change and continually striving for improvement. His motivation to deliver excellent services personally and departmentally is widely recognised.

shielding programme, and working with local organisations and supermarkets to ensure that individuals at highest risk were supported and provided for. Roger leads on the adult services assurance programme, organises the peer challenge and chairs the Quality Assurance Board. Beyond the department, Roger contributes to wider corporate initiatives, chairing the council-wide governance forum and leading the adult services' environmental sustainability plan.



Paula Duffy Team Manager St Helens Council

The COVID-19 pandemic saw demand at St Helens' front door for practical/emotional/mental health and crisis support almost double. Paula was instrumental in working with multiple partners across the Council and in wider partnership with St Helens Together to help those most in need of support. This was all achieved while maintaining performance in processing increased health and social care referrals and responding to the impact on the Hospital Trust. Paula supported the teams at every level and her contribution to delivering services and outcomes for residents has been widely acknowledged.

Helen Monks Strategic Service Manager Together For Children Sunderland City Council

Helen is a key member of the senior team that has transformed children's services in Sunderland. Together For Children is the first children's service to move from an 'inadequate' to an 'outstanding' grading in one inspection cycle. Helen's passion for transforming practice has seen her develop a pre-birth team in Sunderland whose model of practice was deemed 'exemplary' by Ofsted and described as 'innovative' and 'good practice' in the recently published *Born Into Care* research. Helen has presented the work of the service in regional and national seminars and will be leading on regional and national work to improve the outcomes for new-born babies and their parents where there are safeguarding concerns.



Alistair Dinnie Refugee and Migration Programme Manager City of Edinburgh Council

Alistair started his local government career with the City of Edinburgh Council in 2001 working in equalities and diversity policy, then political group business management. With a passion for securing positive outcomes for people, Alistair took on his current role in 2015 and leads the council's resettlement operations, supporting refugees from Syria and now Afghanistan. Working closely with partners at a local and national level, Alistair is making a life-changing difference to those most in need of support.

Natalia Bates Service Manager Sandwell Children's Trust

Working with vulnerable children and families for the last 10 years, Natalia is described by those that know her as a deeply knowledgeable, kind and



supportive manager who looks to continually develop her practice and management skills. Despite the challenges of the pandemic, Natalia has been deeply committed to ensuring children's voices have continued to be heard rather than lost in the national crisis. She recently developed in her career as a Service Manager and her values and leadership skills have ensured that she remains child and family focused, supportive and caring of the staff she works with.

Megan Stevens Practice Lead for Violence Against Women and Girls and Sexual Violence Partnership Development Swansea Council

Megan's career in Swansea has progressed from a key frontline role as an independent domestic violence adviser to her current post as Practice Lead. Throughout the pandemic Megan has led on the delivery of the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) strategy which covers a vast range of projects across children and adult services and the third sector. Megan developed a robust action plan for 2021/22 and a monitoring framework for partners. She has also set up a group to ensure co-production of VAWDASV services and secured funding for a number of projects across the Western Bay region.

Gemma Shelton Acting Group Manager for Quality and Market Management Nottinghamshire County Council

Gemma stepped up into the role of Acting Group Manager at the height of the pandemic when ensuring support to social care and health providers was the most significant area of service risk. Gemma was recognised for forging excellent partnerships with health colleagues and providers to ensure Nottinghamshire's most vulnerable residents were given the care and support they needed. Gemma has led by example and worked tirelessly, at times seven days a week, to support the COVID response and deal with the numerous crises in care homes that always seem to crop up on Friday afternoons.



Tanyardzwa Machisa Projects Coordinator (Aim Higher), Children's Services Hertfordshire County Council

Working within the children's services Aim Higher Team, Tanya has been instrumental in delivering the Hertfordshire Virtual School GOLD Standard strategy. The programme has been developed to create opportunities and support to enable young people to regain their motivation and self-esteem in the wake of the school closures caused by the pandemic. This summer, Tanya led a project which gave 17 young people in care the opportunity to take over and run a local tearoom in Mill Green Museum over the summer holidays. Under Tanya's mentoring, they learnt life and work skills which have significantly improved their confidence to take the next step in their education journey.

Emma Skeay Service Manager for Health and Reablement West Northamptonshire Council

Emma has progressed from being a team leader to service manager in under three years. Her natural aptitude for transformation and service redesign unfailingly places outcomes for people at the heart of her design work and this shines through in everything that she does. Emma played a lead role in the Northamptonshire Adult Social Care transformation programme and is now an integral part of the transformation team working with health colleagues to develop integrated care across the county.

Toni Traynor Service Manager, Fostering, Prevention, Wellbeing and Care Leavers Service Wakefield Council

Toni leads a range of services supporting children in care in Wakefield. Through her passion and creativity, Toni has been successful in improving the

recruitment, retention and modernisation of the fostering service, including the successful implementation of the Mockingbird model during the pandemic. She has led the complete redesign of the Next Steps (Leaving Care) service, with a focus on improving young people's emotional health and wellbeing and implementing the family group conferencing model. Toni is also credited for the transformation of the Edge of Care and Emotional Wellbeing Service, undoubtedly preventing multiple family and placement breakdowns during lockdown.

Bruce Bradshaw Strategic Lead, Mental Capacity Act North East Lincolnshire Council

Colleagues in North East Lincolnshire work as one team covering health and social care. Bruce's role typifies these arrangements – as a qualified mental health nurse and general nurse he oversees a range of jointly commissioned service areas and other key functions. As Service Lead for Long Term Care, he led the development of the council's residential care home service as well as their enhanced support offer. During the pandemic Bruce played a critical role in protecting and supporting the care sector to manage outbreaks and he is known for his creativity, integrity, sensitivity and humanity.

Kath McCutcheon Team Manager, Children Looked After and Leaving Care Team (Carlisle) Cumbria County Council

Kath is recognised as a hugely valued member of the team. She has a wealth and breadth of knowledge and works tirelessly to ensure the children of Cumbria get the best support they can. Kath has recently set up a range of projects to enable care leavers with young children to access experiences that they would not be able to otherwise. She has also developed a service plan to ensure unaccompanied asylum-seeking children receive the very best care and outcomes. Kath's experience, commitment and passion is felt to be outstanding.



Harriet Wakeling Head of Data & Intelligence (CYP Services & Adult and Community Services) Suffolk County Council

Harriet leads data and analytics across children's and adult services, the county council's two largest directorates. Her commitment to providing meaningful and impactful insight and intelligence has a significant impact on how services are delivered and on the outcomes being achieved across Suffolk. She has impressed senior leaders with her strategic approach and ability to deliver quickly and efficiently across a wide span of services. Harriet is now part of the directorate management team and continues to demonstrate her ability to horizon scan and plan, whilst retaining a keen focus on operational delivery.

Ellanora Clarke Assistant Director, Youth Justice and Partnerships London Borough of Lambeth

In just two and a half years, Ellanora has progressed from her role as interim head of service to become Lambeth's Assistant Director, Youth Justice and Partnerships. She played a critical role in the borough during the pandemic, developing a range of creative new initiatives to support children and young people experiencing the most challenging circumstances. Ellanora's leadership style and strategic approach has seen her provide exceptional support to her service and work collaboratively with key partners to make a sustained difference to the lives of children, young people and their families who have come into contact with the criminal justice system.



Chris Porter Service Development Manager – Integrated Commissioning Kirklees Council

Working within the integrated health and care commissioning team in Kirklees, Chris has a calm, clear and insightful approach, which is widely respected across the Council and by social care partners. His ability to turn complex data into clear, concise analysis has been pivotal in leading and shaping a number of key strategic initiatives including transforming care for people living with learning disabilities and the journey of vulnerable people through the health and care system.



Helen Taylor Head of Service for Mental Health, Learning Disability & Direct Payments London Borough of Hounslow

Helen has played a truly outstanding role in developing mental health and learning disability/autism services to support Hounslow's residents. Her highly collegiate style and natural aptitude for collaborating with residents, carers, health partners, and the voluntary/community sector has undoubtedly furthered the council's integration journey with health. Helen has also introduced a new strength-based community asset model and reorganised the mental health social work service. Her significant contribution has been recognised across the department and corporately.



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