

FROM PLUMBING TO SOCIAL CARE LECTURER

A Profile of Paul Lea, New IW Chief Examiner



I left school at the age of 16 to take up an apprenticeship as a plumber. Apart from a Diploma in Building and three CSEs, I had no academic qualifications.

I continued plumbing and general building work within the family business until at the age of 30, after running a youth club for Hampshire Youth Service for five years on a part-time basis and gaining a couple of youth worker qualifications, I decided that I wanted to work with people in a social/welfare setting.

My opportunity came when I was appointed as an assistant warden in a probation hostel. At the same time, I enrolled for a BA degree with the Open University. Five years later, I undertook professional social work training at Portsmouth Polytechnic.

On completion of these studies and armed with my degree, I worked for Hampshire Social Services as a social worker and eventually trained with the Police as a member of a child protection team. During this time I gave a number of 'guest lectures' at caring organisations as part of

their training programmes and at local colleges offering child and social care courses.

I enjoyed the experience immensely. Deciding to pursue this avenue further, I undertook some part-time teacher training courses, which enabled me to apply for lecturing jobs.

Success came when in January 1992 I was appointed as a lecturer at Guildford College in Surrey. This included teaching on various social care courses for both part and full-time adults and 16-19 year olds.

I have taught on IW courses



at Guildford since 1992. In 1994, we offered the diploma course and in 1995 we ran the pilot for the Foundation level.

I remember with affection the late John Burrow, Chief Examiner and Trustee, and Education Officer Geoff Roberts, both of whom gave such encouragement and assistance to colleges and tutors and established the role of education within the Institute. It is them I thank for my appointment in 1995 as Staff Examiner with

responsibility for colleges delivering the Foundation course.

I have been married for 27 years, have two sons and enjoy – when time permits – photography, walking, music, water gardening and computers.

Since my appointment as Chief Examiner in March this year, my priority has been to ensure that the examination papers for June and November have been set and that the *viva* programme has been arranged.

I am pleased to say that both have been achieved. The team of staff examiners and subject

co-ordinators met during April and worked hard to this end (an opportunity for me to welcome two new staff examiners, Jane Cummins

from North Trafford College and Jeanette Ladd from Tameside College).

As with any position in an organisation, success is only as good as the team around you. The Institute is no exception. The present team is very committed and I thank everyone in it for the support they have given me since I took up this post.

Once the *viva* programme is completed and the marks are collated and agreed at the Board of Examiners meeting

during July, I shall join with the staff examiners and Head of Professional Studies in the task of reviewing the Institute's current educational provision. This will necessitate looking at the content of the current courses and the way they are delivered. Our priority must be to ensure the courses meet the needs of students and employers.

During my interview for this post I was informed that, if appointed, I would be expected to assess and, if necessary, update the syllabus for the three courses (Foundation, Certificate and Diploma) currently available. My own feelings towards courses in the areas of health, welfare and social care are that, in order to survive, they need to:

- * be flexible in the way they are delivered;
- * reflect current practice;
- * represent value for money;
- * offer life-long learning opportunities;
- * have recognition by Higher Education;
- * be available through distance learning;
- * acknowledge the growing use of the Internet;
- * secure the involvement of, and recognition by, national,

local, statutory and voluntary bodies.

The Institute must develop attractive and appropriate courses in order to survive. Currently, discussions are being held as to the possibility of a degree course in welfare. All three IW courses now meet the approval of the QCA with regard to underpinning knowledge for NVQ levels 1, 2 and 3. In order to continue attracting students to these courses, we need to address:

- * compacts with universities to ensure that successful students from colleges would at least be guaranteed an interview for a first level related subject degree course or even gain exemption in certain units, as some already do;
- * links with local and voluntary organisations.

Finally, should any member or student wish to raise any item which they feel can be of benefit educationally to the Institute, I will be more than pleased to table any issues for discussion.



Campaign to Address Rise in Youth Self-Harm

The Samaritans

A new report by The Samaritans, published in May, calls for more information to be available in hospitals and schools to tackle the rise in youth self-harm.

In 1998 about 160,000 people, including 24,000 teenagers, were admitted to hospital accident and emergency departments in England and Wales for self-harm.

Between 1980 and 1998, self harm among young men aged 15 to 24 years almost doubled. Among those aged 25 to 34, it rose by 15%.

Calls to The Samaritans have nearly doubled in twenty years and the number of e-mails has more than tripled in the last three years alone.

Women aged 15 to 19 years and men are most at risk. Young Asian women are more at risk than other cultural groups.

Following an opinion survey which shows that nearly half the population know someone who has

self-harmed, The Samaritans has launched a campaign to increase public awareness of the signs and what to do about them.

KEY FINDINGS OF THE SURVEY

- * 43% of the population know someone who has self-harmed.
- * Over one in four people aged under 25 years would have no idea what to say to a suicidal friend.
- * Over three quarters of the population believe that men don't get the same kind of emotional support as women.
- * 41% of people believe that self-harm is selfish and 55% believe it is stupid.
- * 97% of people say there should be more information available about coping with depression.
- * 93% of people say there should be more follow up care for self-harmers discharged from casualty and psychiatric units.

Letter from the Cabinet Office

The Institute of Welfare is increasingly being asked to submit views to Government on welfare-related issues. Here, we reproduce a letter to IW chief executive Tom Dean from Sir Richard Wilson, Cabinet Secretary and Head of the Home Civil Service, in response to comments we made on the Government's Training and Development Plans.

