

Wednesday 29.11.17 **theguardian**

The best in public service



Supported by



theguardian.com/psa-awards-2017

It's a well-worn maxim that insanity is doing the same thing time and again and expecting different results. Yet that is still how many of us think and behave. The winners of the Guardian Public Service Awards 2017 are the exception: they have paused, thought and come up with fresh ways of delivering services that are yielding huge benefits.

Our overall winner, Hertfordshire county council, ticks almost every box with its new approach to child protection. With time spent by children in the care system down 50%, no wonder other councils are now trying the same. Two other category winners, Swansea council and Highgate primary school in north London, have similarly swum upstream of developing family and behavioural problems that can require costly interventions by multiple agencies. More importantly, they are transforming children's lives.

Airedale NHS foundation trust has thought, and acted, differently about supporting people who stammer, not just locally, but across the country. Warwickshire county council has opened "charity tip shops" at its household waste centres. Charity Hope into Action has come up with an inspired way of housing homeless people. And Greater Manchester Police is achieving remarkable results in the diversity of its recruitment by, yes, doing things differently.

We have two individual winners. Paul Allen, a social work manager for Manchester city council, scoops our leadership excellence trophy for the way he motivates his children and families team. And Stephen Smith, our public servant of the year, has been chosen by a readers' vote for his tireless work over more than 25 years in Lancashire for people who, like him, have a learning disability.

Thanks to all who voted, to our valued sponsors and the hundreds of entrants for the awards. Public service is changing, and for the better.

David Brindle, public services editor



The Public Service Awards

02 Overall winner/care

Hertfordshire county council: a commitment to help families under pressure and turn around lives

04 Digital and technology

Overcoming speech problems - Airedale stammering therapy project

05 Finance

Shops at the tip in Warwickshire are finding a use for people's cast-offs

06 Health and wellbeing

Primary care: supporting mental health in the classroom

07 Leadership excellence

Pressure valve: how one leader has encouraged his team to let off steam

08 Housing

How church communities have helped to shelter homeless people

09 Learning and development

Keeping it all in the family in Swansea: supporting vulnerable families

10 Recruitment and HR

The drive to increase diversity on the beat in Manchester

11 Public servant of the year

Stephen Smith: "I enjoy chatting, networking - and having fun." Giving a voice to people with learning disabilities

14 Runners-up

Rounding up the very best of entries to this year's Public Service Awards

This content is supported by EY (whose brand it displays). Each category has its own sponsor. All content is editorially independent. For more information, visit: theguardian.com/supported-content
 Editors Debbie Andalo, Sarah Jewell Production editor Sam Noble
 Picture editor Tracey Tomlin Cover photography James Turner
 Contact chris.iggulden@theguardian.com

Child protection finds a new gold standard

One county's overhaul of how to approach families under pressure is yielding staggering results, writes **Kim Thomas**

Overall winner and care winner
 Winner: **Hertfordshire county council, family safeguarding service**

Hertfordshire county council's new way of working with looked-after children and their families is turning lives around and saving millions of pounds at the same time. Its remarkable success is attracting national attention, and being tested by four other local authorities.

England's chief social worker for children and families, Isabelle Trowler, believes the model being developed by the home counties authority could have a "profound" effect on the national system. "I think Hertfordshire might just be our national treasure," she says.

Last night, the extraordinary achievements of the county's family safeguarding team were recognised by the council being crowned overall winner of this year's Guardian Public Service Awards.

David Brindle, the Guardian's public services editor and co-chair of the judging panel, says: "Hertfordshire council has truly broken the mould. By going back to the drawing board and thinking from first principles about how to work effectively with families under pressure, it is delivering outstanding results.

"It's true that the new approach was helped with a significant grant from government. But if you don't ask, you don't get. Hertfordshire asked - and now not just the council, but other public agencies too, are reaping big savings. And, above all, children and families are healthier and happier."

Hertfordshire's ambition was to keep children safely in their own home, taking services directly to the home, rather than referring family members to outside services. As Sue Williams, director of family safeguarding at the council, points out, a parent with a heroin addiction is unlikely to make an appointment with a service two bus rides away, but much more likely to talk to a professional who visits their home.



Sue Williams (centre, second step up) and the Hertfordshire family safeguarding team

Anna Gordon

protection social work teams. It created 22 multidisciplinary teams, which uniquely included professionals with expertise in adult services - probation officers to tackle domestic abuse, recovery workers to address substance misuse and mental health professionals to assess and treat parents.

At the same time, social workers were trained in motivational interviewing - a technique that involves listening to parents sympathetically and working with them to develop a plan of how they would like to change.

"We start off with the parents, asking them to tell us about their lives and their experience. We acknowledge the difficult lives and upbringing they've had; it encourages them to open up. We talk to them about the services that we could offer to try and help them with their really difficult challenges," says Williams.

The project, which started two and a half years ago, is now funded by the council and its partners. But other local authorities have shown interest, and with the help of £11.6m of government funding, four other councils - Luton borough council, Peterborough city council, Bracknell Forest council and West Berkshire council - are now testing the Hertfordshire model.

So what of the people who really matter in all this - the families? An independent evaluation obtained moving testimonies from parents about the effect of the intervention.

One man who participated in the domestic abuse prevention programme said that he was calmer, and, as a result, his children were happier.

And a woman who was struggling with substance misuse, domestic abuse and self-harm, and whose two children had been removed from her care, said: "Pieces have been missing out of my heart for years ... now everything is coming together."

“We acknowledge the difficult lives parents have had; it encourages them to open up”

The new service was born out of a commitment to tackle what Williams calls the "toxic trio" of domestic abuse, substance misuse and parental mental health problems - the factors that put children at risk of significant harm.

It also wanted to introduce a less adversarial way of working with families. "If you call on a parent because you've had a concern expressed about the care of their children, then they have a vested interest in lying to you, so you don't take their children away," says Williams. This confrontational relationship contributes to a high turnover of staff in children's social care: "Social workers feel helpless to resolve the problems of the children and families they are trying to support."

Instead of monitoring parents' compliance with protection plans, the

new system empowers social workers to give parents the opportunity to think about what they want to change in their lives. It also instils extra confidence in parents that they will be able to meet their children's needs.

In the initiative's first year, the time children spent in the care system was cut by 50% and, with less reliance on expensive agency social workers, the authority saved about £2.5m. Staff sickness rates have dropped and turnover has fallen dramatically; only 3% of vacancies are unfilled.

But the successes extend beyond the council. The service has also had an

impact on domestic abuse - the biggest single crime in Hertfordshire. By the end of its first 12 months there was a 66% reduction in repeat police callouts to domestic abuse incidents.

There has also been a 53% reduction in emergency hospital admissions for adults and a 36% improvement in pupils' attendance at school. Because the Hertfordshire model doesn't exist elsewhere, it was developed from scratch, with the involvement of almost every council department. With £4.86m from the Department for Education's Innovation Fund, the council began to transform its child

“Pieces have been missing out of my heart for years ... now everything is coming together”

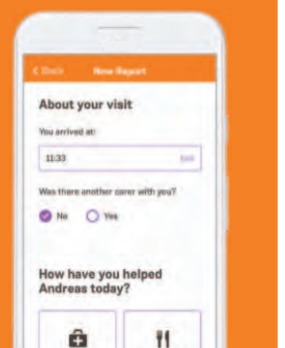


ONCARE

Proudly sponsoring the Guardian Public Service Awards 2017

OnCare makes care delivery easier, helping to save time and money while improving visibility and communication across care workers and clients.

To find out more visit www.weareoncare.com



Digital and technology



Speech service: Stephanie Burgess, who leads the Airedale Stammering Therapy Project

On screen and on point

Speech therapy via video link is bringing a new hope to patients whose lives have been marred by a stammer, says **Rachel Williams**

Digital and technology

Winner: **Airedale NHS foundation trust, Airedale Stammering Therapy Project**

"I'm sad about all the missed opportunities for friendships," Alex said before starting speech therapy. "I've tried to escape from my stammer. I've failed." A month later, the 27-year-old had a different outlook. "The world suddenly seems full of possibilities," he said.

Another patient, Nadim, 47, had been petrified of saying his own name, but was discharged happily after four therapy sessions, saying he was no longer scared of his stammer. And soon

after his first session, Liam, 29, took his young children to the park. It was the first time he had dared go out with them on his own, finally free of the fear he would be unable to ask for help if something bad happened.

All three were only able to access therapy thanks to Airedale NHS foundation trust's stammering therapy project. Since April it has been offering a specialist speech therapy service to adults across the UK via videolink to patients' laptops, tablets and even mobile phones.

The telemedicine service mirrors a typical face-to-face speech therapy session. It includes an initial assessment of the individual's needs and the development of a personal

“With this system you don't have to go to your GP – you just fill in a form online”

strategy. That could involve learning speech techniques to improve fluency or learning how to manage living with a stammer.

With many NHS trusts no longer providing speech therapy for adult stammerers, the British Stammering Association (BSA) receives more than a thousand enquiries annually from people desperate for help.

The impetus for the Airedale project came from speech and language therapist Stephanie Burgess, who received a letter from a prisoner, Mark, she had worked with via videolink. "I read this handwritten letter and cried," she recalls, "and thought: 'Wow, that's an amazing story.'" She sent it on to the BSA – and when the BSA shared the story, it went viral. "The BSA chair rang me up, wanting to know if this was something we could do with everyone."

Set up with a funding of £75,000 from the Health Foundation's Innovating for Improvement programme, the scheme has had 42 referrals through the BSA's website since its April inception. The results are being evaluated by Leeds Beckett University's speech therapy research department; Burgess's own investigations already show promising outcomes. Using a 10-point rating scale to illustrate measurable impact, she determined that, by July, six of the seven patients who started in April had achieved their target, or were within half a point – including those whose therapy was not yet complete.

Despite not seeing them in person, Burgess has found no problems building rapport with her clients. In fact, she thinks there are tangible benefits to receiving therapy digitally, rather than face-to-face. "I think, in many cases, it's better. Coming to therapy is quite a daunting, scary thing for many people. With this system you don't have to go to your GP – you just fill in a form online. People feel comfortable and secure."

The trust and the BSA are now trying to secure funding to continue the project after next April. "I've had people saying they've been trying for years to get help," Burgess says. "People have told me this has changed their lives."

Finance

From goodbyes to good buys

Franchised reuse shops at waste recycling centres have achieved success on multiple fronts, says **Kim Thomas**

Finance

Winner: **Warwickshire county council, franchising of recycling centre reuse shops**

Warwickshire county council's winning project, which franchises reuse shops at its household waste recycling centres, has achieved success on multiple fronts. It is generating £375,000 a year for the council, and another £300,000 for the local Age UK charity, which spends the money on local services. The scheme has saved 700 tonnes of goods from landfill, provides jobs for 39 people and up to 50 volunteers, and gives less well-off families the opportunity to buy affordable secondhand products.

The council initially introduced a charity tip shop at one of its household waste recycling centres in 2003. When residents brought goods to the site, they were given the opportunity to donate them instead to the charity, a local hospice, which would then sell them on. Because there was some doubt about whether it would take off, the charity was charged only a peppercorn rent. But the enterprise rapidly became highly profitable and the scheme was extended to other waste sites and charities.

In 2014, Warwickshire offered the franchise for the shops at eight sites, split into four lots. Age UK Warwickshire won the bid for all four, paying the council £300,000 a year for

an initial period of five years, with the option to extend for another five. The move has paid off: while the charity's overheads (mostly staffing and power costs) come to about £300,000 a year, it makes another £300,000 in pure profit. "It's very healthy," says David Whitehouse, project manager at Warwickshire. "If this was on Dragons' Den, Peter Jones would be whipping out his chequebook."

About a third of the items that the shops take as donations from visitors to the recycling sites are electrical goods, such as televisions, says Whitehouse. These are inspected and certified for safety before being sold on. Vinyl records and cassette players are also proving popular.

Shop customers include local traders, secondhand dealers and those on low incomes – a "healthy mixture", says Whitehouse, "of rich and poor, bagging bargains". The shops have proved particularly valuable for those finding it hard to make ends meet: "We'll get a

“If this was on Dragons' Den, Peter Jones would be whipping out his chequebook”

Shopping tip: the Warwickshire Age UK reuse shop at Burton Farm recycling centre, Stratford-on-Avon

young man setting up his home for the first time and struggling to kit out a flat from scratch," says Whitehouse. He'll come down and, for £20, he can buy saucepans, plates and cutlery, and odds and ends."

If applied throughout the UK, the Warwickshire model could generate £35m a year for local authorities. There has been a great deal of interest from across the country, and the franchise model has already been adopted by other councils.

Meanwhile, the benefits – environmental, economic and social – keep adding up. The council has saved £75,000 a year in disposal costs and landfill tax, as well as cutting CO₂ emissions – Warwickshire's recycling and reuse rate is now at an impressive 54%.

Age UK has invested its proceeds in projects to help reduce loneliness among older people, such as exercise clubs, lunch clubs and befriending services. It's that rare gem: an initiative that has made everyone a winner.



Congratulations to all!

iMPower

Sponsors of the award for digital and technology

Retaining talent is the second biggest challenge facing the public sector. **Finding it is the first.**

SmartSearch from **jobsgopublic**

SmartSearch is a dynamic executive and senior resourcing service. Use a more intelligent, proactive approach – visit jobsgopublic.com/smartsearch



Health and wellbeing



Stigma-free: embedding pastoral care services within the fabric of Highgate primary school has changed how they are perceived

Early intervention the key to success

New 12-strong team cuts exclusions and referrals to mental health services to zero. **Nicola Slawson** reports

Health and wellbeing

Winner: **Highgate primary school, north London, pastoral care team**

Statistics show that one in 10 children - or an average of three children in every classroom - has a diagnosable mental health problem, and 70% of children and adolescents who experience mental health issues have not had appropriate interventions at a sufficiently early stage.

It is against this backdrop - and the school funding crisis - that Highgate primary school has transformed the

“We want to give families support, so they don't have to be referred to social care”

usual pastoral care function with an innovative new grassroots model that has achieved incredible results.

One in four children at the school in Haringey is eligible for the pupil premium grant, 30% receive free school meals and a high proportion speak an additional language; more than 40 other languages are spoken at the school. Issues that have affected some of the schoolchildren include bereavement, divorce and domestic violence.

The project is led by child psychotherapist, Katy Whitney. “I'm a bit like an onsite social worker, as I am also the safeguarding lead,” she says. “I support all the children's and families' needs, and liaise with all relevant professionals.”

Wanting to develop a systemic and holistic approach, Whitney and the school created a therapeutic service in partnership with training organisations that needed to find placements for trainees. The team of 12 psychotherapists and counsellors - made up of newly qualified volunteers and trainees, plus a wellbeing practitioner and a sports mentor - is responsible for the health and wellbeing of more than 450 children, 18 teachers and all support staff.

For children, there's one-to-one counselling, psychotherapy, art therapy, play therapy and targeted group work. They also provide therapy for parents, as well as facilitating groups for specific issues; a qualified counsellor provides staff counselling.

“We don't want child protection to be seen as punitive,” says Whitney. “We want to give families the support they need, so they don't have to be referred to social care. Because the service is so embedded in the school, there is no stigma attached to using it.”

The project, evaluated annually, costs just £8,500 a year and is already proving its value: there have been no permanent exclusions this year and referrals to child and adolescent mental health services have also been cut to zero. Behaviour has significantly improved and staff wellbeing and retention has also increased.

One teacher says: “I used to feel like a social worker and was out of my depth dealing with not only the children's issues but their parents' too. I can [now] concentrate on teaching and am significantly less stressed as a result.”

Whitney and her team hope other schools will copy their innovative model, so more children can benefit.

Leadership excellence

Inspiration, passion and care

Paul Allen knows how to motivate his team of social workers and keep their stress levels low, says **Jane Dudman**

Leadership excellence

Winner: **Paul Allen, team manager Manchester council**

Paul Allen has spent a decade in social work, mainly in Manchester, where he has been a social work manager for the past four years. He's spent the past 12 months of that managing a team of eight social workers in one of the most deprived areas of north Manchester.

“We work with complex and deprived families, many of whom have spent years in a cycle of poverty,” he says. “The hardest part of what I do now is to keep my team motivated, to keep up morale and make our social workers the best they can be.”

The judges recommended Allen, who is originally from Coventry, as a highly committed manager who, almost without knowing it, has inspired those he works with and cemented their commitment to social work. All this at a very difficult time, when many professionals believe their caseloads are unmanageable and are having to work extra hours. Some are even having to cancel personal advancement opportunities to keep up with their workload.

One of Allen's skills is seeing the potential of his team, and encouraging their learning and development. His work demonstrates that leadership excellence can be found at all levels within an organisation, not just at the very top.



Paul Allen: revered by his team for creating a say-anything environment

Allen says that one of the really great things about being nominated for this award was the reaction from his colleagues. “This means a lot to me and my team, especially when you see a lot of negative things written about about social workers in the press,” he says.

“These awards show people the positives of the what we do - and that when you put a lot of hard work in, you can get recognition.”

Described as an inspiration and a passionate leader, colleagues say Allen is completely committed to achieving positive outcomes for children and their

families, which is not easy in such an incredibly stressful and demanding job. And he draws on his own experience in the profession to remind dispirited colleagues of social work's values.

His team say Allen encourages them, instilling confidence and building self-esteem, and has created a non-judgmental environment, in which they know they can discuss anything. That's a hard balance in any workplace, let alone social work, where any mistakes could have serious consequences. Allen's guidance enables his team to examine their work closely, frankly and promptly.

“For me, it's about taking the stress off social workers, so they can get out and see their children and families,” says Allen. He says that he's good at shutting off once he's out of work, with family and friends, and tries to encourage colleagues to do the same,

“It's about taking stress off social workers, so they can see their children and families”

despite the huge pressure they are all under. “I know when I need to take time out and recognise that in the team as well, so I always say to them: “Time to take a break,”” says Allen.

According to colleagues, Allen doesn't always recognise his own leadership abilities, or the influence that he is having.

Allen himself believes that his work is rooted in a simple fact: “I know it sounds like a cliché, but I have a genuine passion for social work. Otherwise, I wouldn't have been doing it for 10 years.”



Will you be at the local government event of the year?

LGA Annual Conference and Exhibition 2018

INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, BIRMINGHAM
3-5 JULY 2018 @LGACOMMS | #LGAConf18

For more information and to find out about sponsorship opportunities, visit www.local.gov.uk/conference

A national company with unbeatable local knowledge and a well-earned reputation for placing high-calibre senior executives and interim managers into local government and the public sector:

- Executive Search
- Interim Management
- Assessment and Development

Whether personal or corporate, contact us for a discreet conversation.

nick.cole@veredus.co.uk
0330 024 9788

www.veredus.co.uk

VEREDUS

Housing

Hope for the homeless

Church communities are coming together to offer accommodation to the most needy, thanks to a new scheme. **Saba Salman** reports

Housing

Winner: **Hope into Action**

Mubarak Babiker Mohamed says it is “scary” to think of what might have happened to him without support from housing charity

Hope into Action (HIA).

The 29-year-old fled his native war-torn Sudan in 2014. He travelled for months - through Egypt, Italy and France - then crossed the Channel clinging to the underneath of a lorry before giving himself up to police at Dover. He was sent first to an immigration centre, then had Home

“There should be a house for every church in every community”

Office accommodation in London, Birmingham and Wolverhampton.

Although he was granted asylum status, regulations meant he had to leave his accommodation within 28 days. “I was alone and homeless,” he recalls. However, Peterborough-based HIA, which enables church communities to buy houses for homeless people to live in, offered him a home in the West Midlands. “For the first time in years I felt safe. I had a home, I belonged somewhere - it was an amazing feeling.”

After a foundation year at the University of Wolverhampton, Mohamed has just started a mechanical engineering degree. He’s one of 120 people currently housed by HIA, which

manages 50 houses in 14 towns and cities in England, from the Isle of Wight to Lincoln.

The charity finds an investor (or group of investors) linked to a church to buy a property. Investors retain ownership, but lease houses to HIA, which charges affordable rents and maintains the property.

HIA gives investors a small annual return of up to 2% and finds tenants - people of all faiths and none, all ethnicities and sexualities - via homeless agencies. Church volunteers provide tenants with support and mentoring, while HIA’s specialist staff offer weekly help with benefits, maintaining tenancies or signposting to other agencies.

Executive director Ed Walker describes the use of investment capital as “a 21st-century way of ‘sharing’ wealth with the needy”. The unique aspect is that a church partners each house, helping tenants form community links: “We want to reintroduce the relational element of outreach to the homeless, [because we believe] relational poverty is the root cause of so much homelessness.”

The work is timely; there is scarce public funding for homelessness and research shows that homelessness in Britain is due to more than double, to half a million, by 2041.

In 2016-17, HIA housed 152 people. Of these, 87% maintained their tenancies and about 23% found employment. In addition, 89% who had been in custody abstained from crime, while 81% of those who had previously misused drugs or alcohol reduced their intake.

Walker, who has a background in housing, established the first house in his hometown of Peterborough in 2010. A conversation with a rough sleeping ex-offender led Walker to question what churches could do, and he decided to invest his own money into buying HIA’s first house. The initiative now has 10 full-time equivalent staff and 200 church volunteers.

“There should be a house for every church in every community,” says Walker. “We want to spark a revolution in how people use their money.”



Mubarak Babiker Mohamed and former archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams

Learning and development

A lifeline for families in need

A scheme to support schoolchildren and their parents is easing the burden on social services, says **Mary O’Hara**

Learning and development

Winner: **Swansea council, Team Around the Family in Schools (TIS)**

Primary school staff in Swansea are being trained to provide early support to pupils and families. As well as helping people turn their lives around, they’re also reducing the number of preventable referrals to social services.

One mother, a single parent under enormous stress, tackling benefit and employment problems, says the Team Around the Family in Schools (TIS) initiative has been her “lifeline”, adding: “Someone cared - and I feel very fortunate.”

TIS sits within Swansea council’s established Team Around the Family (TAF) division, which was originally set up to work with families with needs that cannot be met by a single service.

TAF trains staff in schools to “begin to recognise and tackle early-stage social challenges facing their pupils”, and ensure “the right support at the right time”, to vulnerable families, the council explains. Training - covering areas such as parenting, domestic abuse, mental health and safeguarding - is offered to headteachers, pastoral workers and teaching assistants.

So far, the results have been impressive; in its first year there were 286 referrals from schools to TAF and the council’s family partnership team. Now in its third year, and with dedicated resources embedded in



schools, that figure has dropped to 88 for the first nine months of the year. The TAF waiting list is now down to nil and the £130,000 annual TIS budget has proven to be cost-effective, as it relieves pressure on more complex services down the line. To date, 607 families and children from 63 primary schools have been supported by TIS.

TIS was set up to address the long waiting list for a TAF referral, which, in turn, was putting pressure on early intervention social work services. Too many children awaiting support were also ending up in child protection or statutory services.

Collaboration and partnerships have been crucial to the success of the scheme, as has making the initiative sustainable, says manager Sue Peraj, who spearheaded the project. While some schools were reticent to begin

Karla Edgecombe, family liaison officer at Gors Community primary, and Carol Ward, TAF coordinator

with, when the training began to bear fruit for families, schools and social work capacity, the scheme grew. “We’ve seen a reduction in escalation of need and a reduction in referrals,” Peraj says. “Schools are wanting more training.” Other councils have been in touch to learn more about the results, she adds.

Headteachers have praised the programme as an innovative response to a difficult problem. “I cannot speak more highly of the service in its aim to help others in times of crisis,” says one. “TIS really has made a difference to our community.”

Testimonials from families also suggest the initiative hits the mark. “After four sessions with TIS on understanding and managing emotions, I saw a big difference in my son,” says one parent. “He now seems happier in himself and not so worried.”

“TIS really has made a difference to our community”

Norse is proud to support the Guardian Public Service Awards 2017.

Visit ncsgrp.co.uk to find out more.

Norse

Proudly sponsoring the learning and development category

Skills for Care helps to create a well-led, skilled and valued adult social care workforce. Our practical support helps leaders and managers to **recruit, develop** and **lead** their staff.

Find out more at www.skillsforcare.org.uk



skillsforcare

Recruitment and HR



Detective chief inspector Ian Crewe, centre front: 'The quality of the people we've got is astonishing'

Community policing begins with recruitment

Greater Manchester Police's drive to bring more diversity to the ranks has created a more balanced force, says **Rachel Williams**

Recruitment and HR

Winner: **Greater Manchester Police, positive-action recruitment team**

In a city where black and minority ethnic (BME) people make up 17% of the population, there was concern within Greater Manchester Police (GMP) that just 5% of the force's officers classified themselves as BME. But that figure is now rising steadily, thanks to an unprecedented, carefully targeted recruitment campaign.

A newly created positive-action

recruitment team enlisted the help of influential community members from the worlds of business, academia, media and faith, and held 400 events in the course of a year to promote police careers directly to BME communities in the area.

A clear commitment was made to use a general GMP recruitment drive - to attract 500 new officers from any background, each year for four years - as a springboard for transforming the diversity of the organisation, says detective chief inspector Ian Crewe, who led the recruitment team. GMP also decided, when vacancies occurred, to directly email anybody who had

“We were just not reflective at all of the community we serve”

already expressed an interest in joining the force following its extensive community engagement work - including that not targeted specifically at BME communities.

Of the 283 student officers externally recruited by the force between January and July 2017, a third (95) were BME.

“The quality of some of the people we've got is astonishing: the language skills and the cultural skills,” Crewe says. “We're breaking new ground.” That includes the force's first Orthodox Jewish student officer, and particular progress within the South East Asian Pakistani heritage community.

While additional funding was needed to support administration and training further down the line, the force's strategy was for existing employees - recruitment staff and serving officers handpicked from their day jobs - to deliver the programme. That meant it could dedicate more money to future officers' salaries - which, in turn, made their recruitment message more persuasive.

The team had plenty of barriers and myths to overcome, including suspicion that the police were institutionally racist, people's worries that they would be rejected because English was not their first language, and women who feared their families would not want them to join the force.

“Most of the people we've recruited [from BME backgrounds] over the past 12 months had never considered working for the police, so we knew we had some work to do,” Crewe says.

“If we don't try to persuade people, if we don't show them the advantages of working for GMP, they just won't apply. I spoke to females who said their fathers and brothers would not have supported them applying, but because of the kind of engagement work we'd done, they were going along with it.”

Crewe believes a more diverse force makes for greater operational effectiveness. “There was a desperate need to do this, because we were just not reflective at all of the community we're serving,” he says. “It's challenging work, but I feel we've made some real progress.”

Public servant of the year

'It's important I have a voice'

Speaking up on behalf of other people with learning disabilities is Stephen Smith's mission, says **Emma Sheppard**

Public servant of the year

Winner: **Stephen Smith**

Stephen Smith has been an avid campaigner for people with learning disabilities for the past 25 years.

After volunteering his time with organisations including Jigsaw (a self-advocacy group), People First, and Castle Supported Living in his home county of Lancashire, Smith became a project worker with the peer advocacy project Research in Action (React) six years ago.

Smith, who came top in the public vote for this award, draws on his own insight of having a learning disability to shape and improve services for others. Those who work alongside him describe Smith as inspirational.

“I enjoy the work I do,” he says. “It's important for me to have a voice to encourage other people [with learning disabilities] to improve their confidence, and to help people understand what good support is, and what it means to have a learning disability.”

Before he became a paid employee at React - an organisation led by people with learning disabilities that aims to give service users as much choice and control over the support they receive as possible, and improve the accessibility of services - Smith attended morning meetings at the group.



Stephen Smith: helping people understand what it means to have a disability
Mark Waugh

He then became a volunteer, before going on the payroll at the project - founded by charity Caritas Care in 1995. Now a project worker based at its offices in Preston, Smith is involved in helping to raise awareness of the needs of people with a learning disability.

He regularly visits service providers - including GP practices and NHS trusts - to deliver training in improving staff's understanding of what it means to live with a learning disability.

Day to day, he also attends or hosts meetings, conferences and workshops for local, regional and national initiatives, where he shares his experience and expertise.

Asked what he enjoys most about his job, Smith says it is meeting people and the variety of the projects he's involved with. “I enjoy networking and chatting to people. That's what's important to me, really. All of the work I've done over the past 25 years has been about that - and having fun.”

Improving the quality of services for people with learning disabilities is a cause Smith feels passionately about and campaigns tirelessly for. He has been involved in national campaigns, such as the right to vote and boosting the awareness of cancer screening. He has supported the development of the Lancashire learning disability board and is currently the director of self-advocacy in the county.

His contribution to local advocacy work has already been recognised this year, when he was awarded a leadership award at the North West self-advocates conference in Blackpool. He also attended the London launch of Quality Matters, a new framework for social care introduced by the Care Quality Commission inspectorate, and worked with Skills for Care on its Good and Outstanding Care guide.

Smith, who lists singing in a local choir and supporting Clitheroe FC among his hobbies, says he was thrilled and delighted to be shortlisted for the Public Servant of the Year award, and that winning would be “a dream come true”.

In the future, Smith hopes to continue working in a job he enjoys, and getting the message across that people with learning disabilities have a voice too. “[It] would show just how important it is for people to get involved, just as I did,” he says. “Having a voice is what it's all about really.”



PPMA is the first choice association for HR and OD professionals across Public Service.

Our 2018 PPMA Excellence in People Management Awards are now open as is booking for our 2018 Annual Conference.

Find out much more about us at www.ppma.org.uk

Proud sponsors of the Guardian
Public Service Awards 2017

ey.com/uk/govt

© 2017 Ernst & Young LLP. All Rights Reserved.

EY
Building a better
working world

It's not just about the winning

Sadly, each category in our Public Service Awards can have only one winner - but here are the best of the rest

Learning and development runners up:

Baby Lifeline: Birth 2 (bringing interactive response training to hospitals) maternity training initiative

The UK has one of the highest neonatal mortality rates in western Europe - so effective training for health professionals to improve birth outcomes is crucial. Judy Ledger, chief executive officer of the charity Baby Lifeline, says this was a key reason for setting up its Birth 2 multidisciplinary training initiative. The programme, which has trained thousands of professionals - including midwives and paramedics - since it launched in 2014, offers courses on subjects such as maternal critical care and childbirth emergencies in the community. With NHS training budgets stretched, Birth 2 offers vital professional support. Evidence of success includes a reduction in the rate of emergency caesarean sections in some areas. "The impact of the training has been enormous," says Ledger. **MO'H**

Carmarthenshire county council: Dewis Sir Gar training strategy for call handlers involved in the information, advice and assistance service

Branded "trailblazing" by an independent audit, Carmarthenshire county council's Dewis Sir Gar - Choice Carmarthenshire - which provides a single point of access for social care enquiries, has quickly become a proven success. Samantha Watkins, the council's advice and assistance manager, says that thanks to the strategy to train existing Careline call-handling staff to expand their expertise and work alongside health and social care professionals, callers can now access a tailored 24/7 service. The service means that frontline staff are better able to filter enquiries, directing the most vulnerable clients to where they can seek help, while also creating capacity within the department. Staff feel more motivated and better supported. **MO'H**



Digital runners-up

Greater Manchester Police: mobile team

In an era of tightly squeezed budgets, a rollout of smartphones and tablets at Greater Manchester Police (GMP) has saved more than 10,000 hours of frontline officers' time every month. Travel time has been cut because, for example, officers do not need to return

to the station to complete witness statements and record crimes, and having the ability to access shared photographs and intelligence on the go makes them better able to make swift decisions. Feedback from officers has been overwhelmingly positive, says GMP's technology lead, chief superintendent Phil Davies: "I'm reliably led to believe it's one of the best bits of kit they've had for a while." **RW**

Runners-up

The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, Better Connected workshops for homeless people

As the number of online public services increases, homeless people, more than ever, need to be digitally savvy. However, homeless charity The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, central London, realised that a significant number of its clients were not engaging with its more formal IT training because of their complex needs, chaotic lifestyles and fear of digital technology. In response, it set up Better Connected: informal, interactive and fun workshops teaching essential online skills. Run in its client drop-in area twice weekly, the workshops attracted 227 people in a year. “Like it or not, digital technology is here, so we have to make it interesting and safe for people to use,” says digital inclusion project worker Chris Andrew. **RW**

Recruitment and HR runners-up City of Wolverhampton council, Recruiting Wolverhampton

A streamlining of City of Wolverhampton council’s recruitment process has cut the average time between human resources being asked to advertise a job and a candidate confirming a start date from 21 weeks to 10. That reduced the number of candidates withdrawing, and helped fill 68 social worker vacancies between April 2016 and March 2017. Meanwhile an apprenticeship scheme, begun in 2012, has helped fill skills gaps, with 63 of the 122 apprentice graduates taking jobs with the council afterwards. “The speedier recruitment process has made a big difference,” says head of human resources Denise Pearce. “To be advertising social work vacancies every three months and filling those roles - that’s a real success story.” **RW**

Lincolnshire county council, revitalised social worker recruitment team

Applications for social work positions with Lincolnshire county council have increased dramatically and spending on agency workers is down by 45%, thanks to a shake-up of the recruitment strategy. Frontline staff played a key role in shaping the campaign message, and specific groups were targeted using Facebook and LinkedIn. Over four weeks, one advert attracted more than 10 times the number of applicants that 22 adverts had in the previous 10 months, and those appointed included experienced practitioners. “It’s about [having] people who know how to do the job and are able to make the decisions,” says Sam Clayton,

Public servant of the year: runners-up

Julie Hunt, leader of special needs youth club, Riverside Youth Centre

Julie Hunt has been running the special needs youth club, run by Canterbury Academy for Kent county council, for the past 10 years. It’s been a bumpy decade because of funding cuts, but she’s fought to create a safe space for young people with intellectual disabilities. “It’s phenomenal to watch them,” she says. “Their confidence just grows. I have the best job in the world.” Hunt admits that she is not expecting to win, and didn’t even vote for herself in the public vote. But she hopes to use the publicity as ammunition to garner support. “That would be wonderful - to have the recognition for how valuable the project is, so we can continue.”

Olena Batista, New Horizons officer, Making Money Count, Clarion Futures, Clarion Housing Group

Olena Batista has worked with the Making Money Count team after it was awarded a £1m grant from the Big Lottery Fund. “It’s challenging to try and help someone change their behaviour towards money,” she says. “But when you see a smile on someone’s face and they say they’re glad they contacted you, then that makes the job worthwhile.” Batista is overwhelmed to have been shortlisted for the award, but says that she is not complacent. “Being nominated encourages me to do better,” she says. “Our project comes to an end next April, but we’re hoping it will be adopted [more widely] and we can help more people.”

“Like it or not, digital technology is here, so we have to make it interesting and safe”

Lincolnshire’s principal child and family social worker. **RW**

Finance runners-up Independent Lives, partnership using personal health budgets in end-of-life care

Two clinical commissioning groups and three third-sector organisations came together in the Independent Lives partnership to explore whether personal health budgets could be used to support people at the end of life to die in a place of their choosing. For example, participants could spend the money on support services, such as an end-of-life doula. An evaluation found that a death in hospital costs the NHS twice as much as a death elsewhere. Independent Lives’ director of services, Katherine Wynne, says the project is about “helping more people to have a better death, while reducing the financial costs to the NHS”. **KT**

London Councils Housing Directors’ Group, accommodation rates project

Shrinking supply and increasing demand means that London boroughs often pay over the odds for temporary

Paula Farson, chief executive officer, London Accessible Psychotherapy Independent Service (Lapis)

“I was surprised and kind of embarrassed,” Paula Farson says about being nominated for the award. “I’m very bad at self-promotion, but I’m very eager that the service I’m developing is more widely known.” While training as a psychotherapist, Farson searched for a clinical placement that tackled serious health problems and disability but found that few existed. She has now built a team of 12 practitioners at Lapis. “There’s a definite need for counselling and therapy in this area,” she says. “I really love my job. Psychotherapists are there to walk beside people when they’re making changes to their lives ... it’s fascinating.”

Sara Jones, head of commissioning, Sussex Police and Crime Commissioner’s Office

Sara Jones stepped into a new role in 2014 after commissioning powers were devolved to local authorities. Although it has had its challenges, she loves being able to see the difference her decisions have had on frontline services and says that it is “humbling” to be nominated for this award: “It’s a very new area of business in local government ... and we have to be innovative in what we put in place. To have that endorsement that this work is important to people - it just helps on the bad days, to know there’s a reason I keep pushing on this door.” **ES**

rented accommodation for homeless people. Sometimes a council will try to relocate people on its housing waiting list outside its borough, and private landlords will look for the borough that will pay the most. To tackle rent inflation, in February 2016 all 32 London boroughs shared information about what they were being charged, using bespoke CarePlace software. It involved hundreds of people inputting data and Mark Meehan, London Councils Housing Directors’ Group’s project lead, says it is a “phenomenal piece of work”. At a time when prices are shooting up in the private rental sector, prices in temporary accommodation have fallen slightly, as a result of this information-sharing. **KT**

Housing runners-up Arhag housing association, Rise into employment programme

Arhag’s Rise into employment programme - run in partnership with BME-led social enterprise Olmecc, which promotes economic and social justice through training and mentoring - improves people’s employability, confidence, digital skills and financial resilience. The project, which is driven

Runners-up

How the awards were judged

The 25 judges for the Public Service Awards had the task of choosing a shortlist and winners in each of the categories, except for public servant of the year. The panel comprised Vidhya Alakeson, chief executive, the Power to Change; Sharon Allen, chief executive, Skills for Care; Helen Backus, Public Servant of the Year 2016; Michael Beaven, managing director, Methods; Niall Bolger, chief executive, Sutton council; Dwayne Branch, head of business investments, Newham borough council; Kate Carr, director of partnerships, engagement and communications, Office of the Future Generations Commissioner; Nick Cole, head of local government, Veredus; Jessica Crowe, executive head of customers, commissioning and governance, London borough of Sutton; Piali Das Gupta, head of policy, Solace, and former assistant chief executive, Birmingham city council; Aisling Duffy, chief executive, Certitude; Anthony Douglas, chief executive of Cafcass; Peter Fleming, leader of Sevenoaks council; Steve McGuirk, chairman, Warrington and Halton hospitals foundation trust; Terry McDougall, group director of Solace; Jo Miller, chief executive, Doncaster metropolitan borough council, and president of Solace; Dave Penman, general secretary, FDA; and Matt Stevenson-Dodd, chief executive, Street League.

They were joined by Guardian journalists Clare Allan, writer and lecturer; Alison Benjamin, editor, Society Guardian; David Brindle, public services editor; Patrick Butler, editor, education, health and society policy; Jane Dudman, editor, public leaders, housing and voluntary sector networks; Clare Horton, editor, healthcare professionals and social care networks; and Polly Toynbee, author and columnist.

by an ethos of “people, not numbers” and began in 2015, prepares people psychologically and practically for the jobs market, resulting in sustainable and meaningful employment. For example, in six months, the project supported 47 people, with over 60% of participants getting work, better jobs or training leading to employment opportunities. Judges felt that Rise was “an unusually effective approach” and replicable in other housing associations. **SS**

Bron Afon community housing, Homes That Work

The social housing enterprise helps support people’s emotional and physical wellbeing. The aim is to build resilience, improve quality of life and help people reconnect with community services and social networks. In 2016-17 staff supported 155 people and families with complex needs, such as mental health issues, alcohol and substance misuse or disabilities. As a result, 21 children were removed from the child protection register and 14 evictions were prevented. Judges admired the “innovative and inspiring approach to going the ‘extra mile’.” **SS**

Health and wellbeing runners-up A Mile in Her Shoes (AMiHS)

AMiHS is a volunteer-led, London-based organisation that partners with other charities to provide fun, inclusive weekly running groups for women affected by homelessness. Homeless women face significant multiple disadvantages and worse outcomes compared with their male contemporaries. They can have mental and physical health problems, which exercise and social activity is proven to aid. Instead of just running for a few miles, the group plays running-based games, and members are provided with a full kit and a healthy snack afterwards. Participants report increased confidence, improved fitness and a sense of belonging. The judges praised the project’s simplicity and low costs, its willingness to adapt to meet the particular needs of participants, and its potential to scale up. **NS**

Vale of Glamorgan council, Dragons’ Den-style wellbeing challenge group

During the past 18 months, Vale of Glamorgan council has been investing in staff engagement in the face of local authority budget cuts. One initiative that proved popular with staff was its “Dragons’ Den” wellbeing challenge. Staff were invited to come up with creative and low-cost projects. Those shortlisted would then be asked to pitch their ideas to a ‘Dragons Den-style’ panel.

From a choir to a gardening club, the multiple, zero-cost projects that have spun out of this corporate initiative already appear to be providing a dividend in terms of staff morale and engagement. The judges praised the council’s enthusiasm and its non-hierarchical grassroots approach. **NS**

Care runners-up Cardiff and Vale University health board, nutrition and diabetic services

Like other emergency units (EU), University Hospital of Wales sees a lot of frail and elderly patients, many of whom are malnourished or dehydrated. The nutrition and dietetic service at Cardiff and Vale University health board introduced a food, drinks and hot meals service to patients arriving at the EU. It ensured that patients with specific nutritional needs received the appropriate food and drink, both in hospital and back in the community. Patients are pleased with the service, and almost all have seen an improvement in weight. Judyth Jenkins, head of nutrition and dietetic services, says: “If people are well-nourished, they do much better. You will want to get out of bed and move around. It’s absolutely fundamental.” **KT**

Spectrum Community Health CIC: pulmonary rehabilitation programme, HMP Full Sutton

Inmates of high-security prisons experience high rates of chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, a lung condition usually caused by heavy smoking. Last year, practice nurse Suzie Ingram and Liz Littlewood, head of clinical services at HMP Full Sutton, Yorkshire, introduced a six-week pulmonary rehabilitation programme to help 21 prisoners manage their condition more effectively and improve lung function. At the end of the programme, which involved doing simple exercises in the gym, and included an educational element, levels of breathlessness were reduced. Prisoners responded positively, and the programme will continue next year. “Some prisoners,” says Ingram, “have asked to come back to the offer support and guidance to the people doing it for the first time.” **KT**

Leadership runners-up Fiona Jenkins, executive director, therapies and health science, Cardiff and Vale University health board

A registered physiotherapist herself, Jenkins has led the way to ensure that therapists and health scientists have equal recognition alongside other clinical professions at all levels of

healthcare, including board level. Since the integrated health board was created, nine years ago, Jenkins has represented her teams of specialist staff to give them a voice alongside doctors and nurses, and other members of the medical profession. At a time of austerity, with huge challenges for all health services, she has championed the capabilities of therapists and health scientists. A highly dedicated leader in one of the UK’s largest integrated healthcare organisations, Jenkins has fostered a public service ethos in colleagues and created space for others to lead. **JD**

Carmel McKinney, chair, Northern Ireland fire and rescue service.

McKinney is seen as an outstanding ambassador for the service and was a finalist in 2016 for the most influential woman in a UK fire and rescue service. With a professional background in teaching, McKinney, who has also chaired educational bodies, brings a different perspective to her service at a time of major change for firefighters. She is positively using her position to promote equality and diversity in what has been a traditionally male-dominated service, and is encouraging others to do the same, through an impressive commitment to her role as chair. **JD**

“Some prisoners have asked to come back to offer support and guidance to the people doing it for the first time”