

KAREN FOLEY: Welcome back to Student Hub live. In this spotlight session, we have a spotlight on health, being, and social care. And I am joined by Wendy Turner and Sam Murphy, who are both Associate Heads of School. Wendy is responsible for curriculum, and Sam for Health and Social care. And Nerys Bolton is the co-qualification lead for nursing. And we'll also find data in this session, what it's like to be a social work student.

So, hello all, and thank you for joining me. Wendy, I wonder if we might start with you. Can you tell us a little bit about the school's students? Who might study with the Open University Health, Wellbeing, and Social Care, and what types of subjects may students be studying with you?

WENDY TURNER (Associate Head of School – Curriculum): Oh, thanks Karen, and hi, everybody. So we get a wide range of students that come to us to say that they're thinking of developing themselves, because they either already work in health and social care settings, they might work in a care home, they might work in respite, they might work in prisons, they - they could work anywhere where they're working with people who have health care needs and social care needs. So often, we get people that are some partway through their career and thinking about what they might want to do next.

So they might have a particular focus or a particular direction that they might want to go into. So that might be working with children and young people and mental health needs. Might be working with disabilities. It might be working in secure environments, in care homes, those kind of things. And these kind of settings are both health services, social services, they might be voluntary services, NGOs, those kind of things. So there's a really broad range of people that come to us.

And so you ask me what kind of things do we offer here? So we offer all types of courses to meet people's learning needs and career development needs. So people might be thinking of looking at studying one particular topic, such as dementia or end of life care, or they might want to take it a little bit further, and develop their continuing professional development through looking at a certificate of higher education in health or social care. Or they might want to do a full degree with us, at undergraduate level or at postgraduate level. We have some options there as well.

So lots of different people come to us for lots of different reasons, but it's broadly to understand, learn, and develop themselves, working in the health and social care sector. Does that help?

KAREN FOLEY: And there are a variety-- oh, it's brilliant, yes! What's interesting, as well, is that there are a variety of different qualifications here. So it's not always a degree-based thing. Some people may--

WENDY TURNER: No.

KAREN FOLEY: --for example, want to do a certificate. And you also have links with the four nations, I think, which we've heard today about why that's--

WENDY TURNER: Right.

KAREN FOLEY: --really important in terms of policy and practise. Can you tell us a little bit about that?

WENDY TURNER: Yeah, that is really important. I'm glad you asked me that question, because it allows me to explain it. So for example, if I give you an example of, say, social work and social working-- and we're going to hear from Louise, one of about students, a bit later in the video-- there's slightly different rules and regulations in Scotland and in Wales and in Northern Ireland to, say, England. So when students come to us, they'll be doing the social work degree, but then they'll be signposted to look at the right kinds of things they need to learn, to suit where they live and where they're going to work in the future.

So it's a real Four Nation approach. It really looks at thinking about-- for example, in Scotland, looking at the Youth Justice system. But students in England will still want to be interested and learn about that as well. So it's a real Four Nations approach because we want people to develop themselves. Somebody might be living in England just now, but in six years' time, they might go and live in Scotland. So we need to have stuff that's portable for them to move on and to develop themselves, in terms of knowledge, skills, and experiences.

KAREN FOLEY: And when Fary introduced the programme today, many hours ago, she mentioned that the school, and in fact the faculty, are not just about teaching things, but about doing things as well. And this pandemic has raised a lot of opportunities for the Open University to reach out and help various people. And I've seen that the school has released some free Open Learn materials as well.

WENDY TURNER: Yeah.

KAREN FOLEY: Can you fill us in on what they were?

WENDY TURNER: Oh, yes I can. And we were really excited and really pleased to be able to do that, because for us, it gave us a sense of actually supporting what was going on in helping our colleagues out there. So for example, what we did was we looked up the learning materials that we already had-- so that might have been clinical skills, it might have been emotional skills, it might have been supporting people around bereavement, those kind of things. And we looked at those packages of learning, and we were able to put them together in a complete package, which was then released on Open Learn.

So students, colleagues that went back to work in the NHS, colleagues that went back to work in social care, paramedics, people that were working with our homeless communities, could jump on to Open Learn, select a piece of learning that they need, and just take it for free. And we really felt pleased to be able to offer that to everyone that went back out there, and rolled their sleeves up to help with the pandemic-- which is continuing, and which they'll continue to do-- that those free learning assets are going to continue to be there for people.

KAREN FOLEY: That's wonderful. Thank you so much, Wendy. Sam, I wonder if you could fill us in on health and social care modules and programmes? How do these help people in their work and careers, and is it hard to study these types of courses-- particularly in a distance learning environment?

SAM MURPHY (Associate Head of School, Health and Social Care): Hi Karen, and hi everybody. Yeah, so we have various modules that span our health and social care degree,

which runs from modules on ageing, mental health, children, young people, and wellbeing. Now-- yes. I think any University degree is going to be hard. But the one thing about our health and social care offering is that whatever role you've had in the health and social care environment-- whether that be as a provider, or as a patient, or as a patient advocate-- we give you opportunities to reflect on your practise, and think about the big ideas and theories that you're learning in our degree in order to understand those theories. It's very much we start where the student is at, and we find that students really find that helpful in order to understand those concepts that we're dealing with.

KAREN FOLEY: That's absolutely wonderful. I wonder if we might just pop over to Stacy as well, to check in with how people are at home. Stacy?

STACY: Yes. She needs to remember to unmute.

KAREN FOLEY: You need to turn your microphone off. Ah, yes.

STACY: I've done it. I've done it.

KAREN FOLEY: You're learning.

STACY: I remembered this time, yes. So we have--

KAREN FOLEY: What have you got for us?

STACY: We've got lots of conversations still. Lots of people still with us, well done. They're hanging on in there. We've had a bit of a swap. We've got some health and social care students. We've got some lovely nursing students. We've got one lovely lady who's embarking on a complete career change, which is very exciting. There are some other people that are coming to us after a first career. And now they're wanting to study something new.

So very nice. Everyone's kind of chatting and still introducing themselves, what they're doing. Yes. It's again, it's still bubbling away quite nicely in the chat.

KAREN FOLEY: That's absolutely wonderful. I know some people are returning to study and having a complete career change. Sam, I wonder if you can tell us about mixing with the students. Sorry, mixing a student experience with that previous knowledge. You know, how might students sort of take some of that knowledge, particularly if they are already in a setting, or looking to completely change their setting?

SAM MURPHY: OK. So what we'll do with the activities within the modules that we offer, we invite students to think about their own experience, what went wrong, what went right, what was difficult about it, in order to really understand what was going on for them when that was happening.

So I guess, for example, we've got a level 3 module on leadership and management. You know, where we talk about in that module, about good models of leadership, and not so good ones.

So students can reflect actually on what sorts of managers and leaders they've had in the past. And actually, have those managers and leaders treated them in the right way, or done the right things. You know?

So in terms of skill development and encouraging that reflective practise, we do that throughout the degree, from level 1, all the way to level 3. Which is really good.

And you mentioned earlier about and asked about the COVID pandemic. We've got a brand new level 1 module ready to go, K102, which starts in a couple of weeks' time. And students already have access to that. And we've worked really hard to get materials into that module in order to give students a really current feel around the pandemic and responses to it.

KAREN FOLEY: So could you give us a bit of an overview about how studying, specifically health and social care modules, works? I mean, what sort of happens? What support have students got? And how does it actually look? What goes on then?

SAM MURPHY: Oh, tonnes. So every student has an AL, obviously, to mark their work and give feedback on their work. And what is really good is, it's all in a constructive model. So you know, you might not get the mark you want at the beginning, but tutors are really good at letting you know how to improve on the next time.

We also have tutorial groups with really expert tutors in their field. At Level 1, we have quite a lot of one to one support with students as well. So we recognise that some people might be coming back to study after an awfully long time. And that they need somebody named that is there, dedicated to their development, in order to help them through those first stages of coming to university study. And also tutors that understand what it might be like juggling work, as well as study at the same time.

KAREN FOLEY: And we'll cover all of these generic things on our freshers' event on the 28th of September. So if you are a new student, do make sure that you get a ticket for that and come along. And we'll go through all of those basics that are common across many of the qualifications. But sometimes, I'm glad we're having this session, because things can be quite different if you're in an applied environment also.

So we've got an overview from Gina. Did you want to briefly tell us a bit about some students stories, because I know we've got a clip next to play for Louise as well, Sam.

SAM MURPHY: OK. So Gina was a former student of HSC and she was particularly interested in issues around dementia, when she studied our dementia course several years ago. And she's gone on and done great things in her locality, which is the Southwest of England.

So she's been very strong across the county in advocating for dementia patients, and as a recognition of her service in this area, she was actually awarded the British Empire Medal several years ago. So we're really proud of that particular student.

But I think the important thing for us, as a subject area, is that all of our students go on and do something positive for the people that they're caring for. You know? And I think we all feel that if through our teaching materials, we've made a difference to practise out there in the

real world, then we have had a success. Whether that's in day to day caring, or whether it's in British Empire Medals. You know?

KAREN FOLEY: It's always wonderful to hear about students towards the end. But let's take a look at a student right at the beginning of her qualifications. So we're going to show you a video about Louise, who's just started her social work apprenticeship with us at the Open University. And here, she's going to tell us what it's like.

LOUISE WANNELL: Hi, so it's Louise. A month into the Open University Social Work Apprenticeship. I'm really, really enjoying the course and the study material.

Because it's quite a lot of interactive materials, videos, audio, a lot of close readings. So it gives you a really good opportunity to get a sense of what it is they want you to know, and to be able to retain that information. And a lot of time at the moment about self-reflection as well.

I've definitely now got a hang of the website, which is a lot more reassuring. It is quite intuitive. I find The Open University system really clear to understand actually, so that's been great.

KAREN FOLEY: Wendy, can you tell us just a little bit more about studying social work here at The Open University?

WENDY TURNER: Hi, Karen. Thanks. And that was a great little clip of Louise there. It goes on for a bit longer. It's on the website if anyone wants to see the whole 2 minutes and 47 seconds, I think. Something like that.

But yes. Being a student looking towards gaining social work approval and accreditation, it means that the student is working as a social work associate-- apprentices in Britain. But as a social work learner, whilst they're also studying with The Open University.

So Louise will have been placed within a social work environment. For example, with her local authority. And she will be working alongside studying. And what we'll have done as The Open University is we'll have very carefully looked at time, looked at study calendars, and we'll have tried to work towards a balance of being in the workplace and learning while you're there, as well as having time to study and take it in, and reflect.

So often, social work students are sponsored through their local authority, or through an organisation where someone has the experience where they can learn about experiential learning, about being a social worker, for example, in a children's home, or somewhere else.

So that's across the whole of our four nations. I mentioned the word apprenticeship just then. And we have social work apprenticeships, which at the moment are in England only. But that may change as things evolve for us.

And just to mention that whilst you are a student social worker in your setting, you will be supported by a practise mentor, a practise tutor, who will be working alongside you from the organisation. And then you will also have an assessor from The Open University who will work with you too as well to support you towards gaining your experiences you'll need for your portfolios, and helping you to prepare for assessment around practise.

So you will be supported as Sam mentioned, an associate lecturer, an AL. During your theory, your study. You will have a practise tutor slash practise mentor, who will support you in your practise and learning.

KAREN FOLEY: That was wonderful. Thank you so much, Wendy. Nerys, I wonder if we can come to you and talk a little bit about nursing. So I understand that there are a few options.

NERYS BOLTON (Staff Tutor & Co-Qualification Director Future Nurse Curriculum): Yeah. Hi, Karen. Hi, everyone. Yeah. We offer four pathways through the nursing qualification. That's adult learning disability, child, young persons, and mental health.

And these can be done via a student tuition loan, or within the England area, it is via an apprenticeship route. We also offer nursing associate programmes as well, primarily within England.

We offer two routes through the programme. Once you've chosen which speciality that you're interested in going in, that's a three year route. And a four year route.

But both of those do involve you remaining working in your practise environment. So continuing engaging and complementing the workforce within your normal working role, but also working as a student stroke apprentice, as well as not only doing the practise hours, but you're also doing the studying alongside that as well.

So it really is about working, earning, learning, and putting back into your working environment everything that you are learning through some of the things that Sam was saying within 102, which is our theory module that students undertake. And we've got 104, which is our practise module. And they both complement each other as they go through.

We also support our students while they're out in practise. Very much like what Wendy's just alluded to, is that we have practise tutors who support our students, who help our students find placements to go and get external experiences.

So things like going into a community setting, or an acute setting, to get new skills and acquire different competencies as well.

They also have their associate lecturers that support them with the theory side. And then you have a community of staff tutors who work alongside the students and the practise tutors, again, to support students in practise and support them with their theory, and to help them if they're having issues as they're going through the programme.

We also support them with their assessment work. So their assessment is planned throughout the whole of the year. The student gets told when their assessment dates are, right at the start of the programme.

So the students now will be gaining access to these module websites. So they can go in there and see when all the assessment dates are, and start planning, and managing their time in order to meet the expectations of the course, as well as obviously for us to appreciate the fact that we want to be flexible so to allow our learners.

Like you say, there's a lot of people coming back into education. There's a lot of people who have got young children at home. So this programme is designed to be flexible too in order to support that group of our student population.

You know, like you say, I think both Sam and Wendy have spoken a lot about the fact that there's a lot of support here. And you know, we do inductions. And you know, obviously, it's very difficult at the moment, because we can't get out and see our students.

But we like to engage with them, to support them through, which can be as Sam says, quite a challenging course. Because you are juggling a lot of balls at the same time.

KAREN FOLEY: That's absolutely wonderful. So lots of support there on offer. And you've explained the various things and ways in which they work.

I wonder if you might like to share an example of one of your successful students with us. It's always nice to be able to think about other successes. We have an example of Combi What happened there then?

NERYS BOLTON: Combi was one of our student nurses who was based in Scotland, who was nominated for an award, which he was successful at getting. For us, Combi just embodied the type of student that we have on this programme. Lots of external things going on in his life. He's a father, a husband, loads of family commitments, as well as working out in practise.

And he just excelled in everything he did. He put his heart and soul into his academic work and his practical work. And was just so enthusiastic and dedicated. And people just were so-- the feedback we had about him was just wonderful.

And he was so proud to win that award. Because of the fact that he had a young family, and he was studying and trying to pursue a career that, you know, he desperately wanted to do. And for him, this was his only route to become a registered nurse, because of the commitments that he had, and because he had to continue working to earn some money to support his young family.

So you know, it was a really proud moment for him and for us as an organisation as well.

KAREN FOLEY: It's absolutely wonderful. There's nothing like seeing people graduate. I know people in the chat have been talking about it. It won't be long until your graduation, et cetera. It really does make it all worth it. And some of the tremendous achievements that happen when people study with The Open University.

Well, thank you so much. You've all given us a really wonderful flavour of the, again, very varied nature of students within the school. And so thank you very, very much, Nerys, Sam and Wendy for your time today.

Let me just check on Stacy, with how everyone's at home. Do you know, Stacy, I wish I hadn't. Because I was sitting here thinking, I really would like a piece of toast with some peanut butter on it. And then I looked at what was going on in the chat. And I must say, now, I am absolutely ravenous.

STACY: It's all gone a bit snacky in the chat, I must say. It's getting on a bit, isn't it. 20 past 5:00. We're seeing what's keeping people going.

There's chocolate hobnobs, chocolate spread sandwiches. What have we got? Peaches and crisps, controversially. Not together, I'm informed. One after the other.

KAREN FOLEY: Good, good, good.

STACY: Pancakes. Potentially some pancakes. Nutella, Kit-Kats and coffee, and diet Coke. Goodness me. I'm not sure anyone's going to be sleeping this evening.

KAREN FOLEY: See, it's just that time of day where you can just have a cheeky little snackette and get away with not ruining your dinner completely. But it is difficult. Well done staying with us. I know some people have been here all day, in fact, since 9:00 this morning.

And it's been wonderful having you here sharing your advice and inspiration with others also. And we've only got one more session left today. So do hang on if you would like to.

And we're going to talk about some LAL, languages and applied linguistics next, after this short video break. So we're going to take a look at doing- I can't even speak now.

Doing a social work degree apprenticeship. So we're going to have a little look at this vlog, And then we're going to come back. Hugh, enjoy your Lancashire hotpot. Sounds absolutely delicious. I'll be back after this quick snack break. See you in a minute.

[MUSIC PLAYING]

[Text on screen: [studenthublive.open.ac.uk](https://studenthublive.open.ac.uk)]