

This blog is written by a member of the independent Commission. These views do not necessarily represent the views of the Archbishops' or the Church of England.



for working on the Commission.

In my early 20s I became more disabled and found myself needing to draw on social care. I employ personal assistants who provide practical support in my home to live my life.

Using my experience, I have had various roles trying to improve people's experiences of care. I've attended many (too many!) meetings, where there is much talk about policy, outcomes, frameworks and assessments, but love never gets mentioned. We have systematised care and support into a transactional, task based system, where people can receive 15 minute care visits from many different carers, leaving no space for connection and no value on relationship. The system prioritises physical needs over the emotional and spiritual, but with 1 in 4 of us experiencing mental health problem each year¹ and loneliness increasing² we can't continue as we are now.

Which is why I am pleased to be a part of the Reimagining Care commission where the conversations have been very different. Instead of talking about the burden of an ageing population or the problem of delayed hospital discharges we start from a place that everyone has value, that care should enable all of us to flourish and that in being human we will all both give and need care at different times of our lives. We shared these values and principles that are guiding our work which include loving kindness, empathy and trust.

For many working in the sector, doing their best, these concepts will feel daunting and probably a bit uncomfortable. I was at a Social Care Future event recently focussing on 'the place we call home'. People didn't talk about the type of building or the practical support they need. Instead, they talked about love, family and pets. At the launch of the commission Archbishop Welby asked the commission to be radical. It is clear to bring about the changes needed there will need to be big shifts, but how did we get to a place that in social care talking about love is seen as radical?

At a listening event for the commission hearing from people who draw on social care, one man said, "I want to be loved more". That says it all.

- 1<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/types-of-mental-health-problems/statistics-and-facts-about-mental-health/how-common-are-mental-health-problems/>
- 2<https://www.campaigntoendloneliness.org/loneliness-research/>

Source URL: <https://www.churchofengland.org/about/archbishops-commissions/reimagining-care/news/where-love>