



The Brain Injury Social Work Group  
connecting brain injury professionals

# AUTUMN NEWSLETTER 2019

## Welcome to BISWG's first newsletter...

The BISWG members newsletter provides another forum for the organisation to fulfil its role in raising awareness, educating and promoting good practice in the field of brain injury. To this end annual conferences and local professional forums have been arranged for many years, and the organisation is mindful of the need to find new ways to support members.

Several regional group meetings have been organised in London, the South West and North West. They are an excellent way to update knowledge, network, and to gain an understanding of the challenges and successes faced by other professional colleagues. We are also holding a number of workshops around the country which have been very well received, and we plan to continue these. Don't forget that BISWG has a grant scheme to facilitate attendance at courses and conferences.

The BISWG Trustees represent academic, legal and social care backgrounds, and all are committed to informing and supporting our professional social and health care colleagues. Our trustees have recently been involved as stakeholders in informing the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence Guidelines on Mental Capacity, and also in the review of the Mental Capacity Act.

In 2016 BISWG was delighted to work with the British Association of Social Workers (BASW) to produce practice guidance entitled 'Understanding People Affected by Brain Injury', and then to update it this year. BASW also kindly facilitated a Webinar on the same subject earlier this year.

If you are not already a BISWG member, please join the organisation and see what we have to offer. Visit our website [www.biswg.co.uk](http://www.biswg.co.uk) for information on all BISWG events – we would love to hear your feedback!

Thank you for your interest.

Best wishes

Jackie Burt, BISWG Chair

## Join your BISWG regional group

BISWG has regional groups in the North West, South West and London.

Email [info@biswg.co.uk](mailto:info@biswg.co.uk) for details. If there isn't a group near you, see if the

UK Acquired Brain Injury Forum (UKABIF) has a local group <https://ukabif.org.uk/page/RegionalGroups>





## BISWG represented on Personal Injury Awards judging panel

BISWG's Chair, Jackie Burt recently took part in judging the Personal Injury Awards 2019. Now in their 12th year, the Personal Injury Awards provide a unique opportunity to highlight and celebrate the excellence of individuals and organisations across the personal injury sector.

There are 20 Award categories ranging from Claimant Lawyer of the Year, Personal Injury Trust Provider of the Year to Outstanding Case of the Year. The Awards ceremony takes place on the 27th November 2019 at the Hilton, Manchester.

## Brain injury and its complex partners – resolving the issues?



'Mad, bad and dangerous to know - brain Injury and its complex partners' was the theme of a recent BISWG conference in Manchester, kindly sponsored by Irwin Mitchell Solicitors and the Transitional Rehabilitation Unit in St Helens.

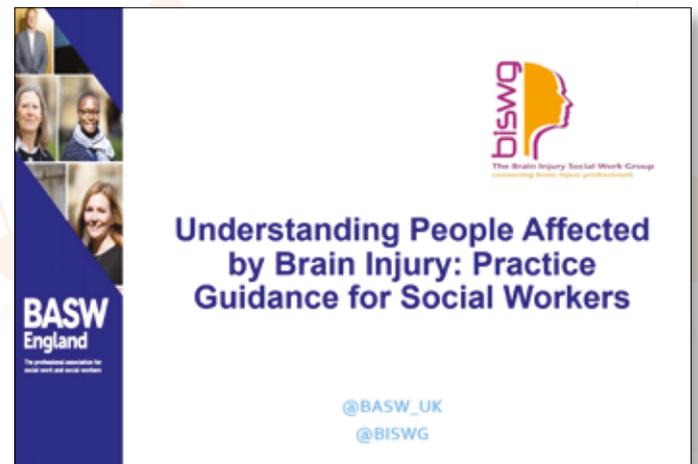
Over 140 participants attended the conference, and revisited the issues highlighted at a meeting in 2010 when BISWG identified the need to consider the experience of individuals with Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) and other complex issues. Despite having navigated changes in health and social care, the Mental Capacity Act, The Care Act and many other reforms in the last nine years, the conference explored which issues, if any, have been resolved, ameliorated or compounded.

The stimulating conference included sessions on health and social care considerations following psychosocial rehabilitation, community transitions after severe traumatic brain injury, alcohol, brain injury and homelessness, psychosis, as well as domestic violence and ABI.

An exhibition ran alongside the meeting supported by Voyage Care, The Richardson Partnership for Care, Red Pepper Nutrition, Potter Rees Dolan, The Disabilities Trust, Neuro Rehab Nutrition, Headway and Head Forward.

## Successful joint webinar with BASW

Over 100 people signed up to the joint BISWG and British Association of Social Work (BASW) webinar 'Understanding Acquired Brain Injury: Practice Guidance for Social Workers' which took place earlier this year. Presented by Drs Andy Mantell and Mark Holloway, the webinar included a discussion session and poll and is now freely available on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F73BX9DaQQs&list=PLUKxAUfL3QVRdEAKzsFRj9wIREhhO4ivr&index=16>



### Webinar feedback:

"The clear introduction and the pace and format was excellent - little prior knowledge was assumed and it was good to have a 'refresher' of the fundamentals".

"Once again, thank you! I am an avid viewer of the BASW webinars, I'm a single mum of three so the just after the bedtime slot is PERFECT".

"I thought the Webinar was very informative. The bio psychosocial perspective was a good introduction to set the scene. The practice focus was excellent. Just the right length of session."

## Families need vital support in the acute phase of TBI

**Charlotte Whiffin PhD BA (Hons) RN SFHEA**  
**Senior Lecturer, College of Health and Social Care**

A recent study has emphasised the importance of working with families in the acute phase of Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI) injury because of their sense of suffering through accumulated losses: loss of certainty; loss of control; and loss of the anticipated future<sup>1</sup>. The families were shown to need support in order to validate their experience, resolve their trauma and prevent the suffering. Such support may go some way to enabling family members to positively adjust to life post-TBI.

Historically the literature has focused on the high levels of psychological symptoms such as anxiety, stress and burden, and the reduced life satisfaction present in family members post-TBI. Researchers have also looked at family-related outcome measures to understand how TBI affects family functioning beyond individual members. Studies have shown the importance of families in the rehabilitation journey post-TBI, and their positive impact on patient outcomes. However, what is not well documented is the subjective experience of families, or the consideration of how individual family contexts shape their lives post-injury.

This longitudinal, narrative case-study used in-depth qualitative interviews and a structured questionnaire. It posed two key questions 1) What are the changes reported by non-injured family members during the first year of a family member's TBI, and 2) Within one family, what are the effects of TBI up to one year following injury?

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## Research output is improving

**Dr Mark Holloway**

Historically Acquired Brain Injury (ABI) has not featured very highly in the research output of academic or practicing social workers, and more work has been undertaken by neuropsychologists<sup>1,2</sup>.

In recent years the criticisms of social work practice with ABI have grown. The significant risks associated with a lack of social worker knowledge have, sadly, led to preventable harm being caused<sup>3,4,5,6</sup>. However, in the last decade there has been an increase in research and practice guidance aimed at social workers. Some of this has been written by members of the profession, and all of it has been aimed at improving practice, quality of assessment, suitability of service provision, and the quality of life for individuals and families affected by ABI<sup>7</sup>.

A recent meeting in York of the International Network of Social Work in ABI identified an increase in ABI research outputs by

Nine non-injured family members from three families were recruited from an acute neurosurgical ward, and individual narrative interviews were held at one, three and 12 months post-injury where participants were asked to talk about their experience of head injury. Following the interview, participants completed the structured questionnaire.

Although the quantitative data suggested there was minimal objective change in family functioning in the year post-TBI, the qualitative data showed just how far reaching the impact of head injury was in these families. The study concluded that working with families to validate their experience, resolve their trauma and prevent suffering may help family members to positively adjust to life post-TBI. Focussing on a narrative of change may be too limiting and proposing a shift in discourse away from change and loss towards transition, may help humanise the care and support provided post-TBI.

For further information visit: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rTNZQJ4ee5c&feature=youtu.be>

### Reference

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/09602011.2017.1387577> Free eprint available from: <http://www.tandfonline.com/eprint/HtiffbRlanhwiGJlqqd5/full>

social workers, and an increase in ABI focussed social work research capacity. Future plans indicate that this improved situation is set to continue, so whilst there is no cause for complacency the profession is, perhaps hesitantly and perhaps a little late, seeking to rectify past errors and this is welcomed by everyone.

### References

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2. Mantell A, Simpson GK, Vungkhanching M et al. *SCIT* 2018;26:433-448.
3. George MS, Gilbert S. *The Neuropsychologist* 2018:59-66.
4. Holloway M. *Social Care and Neurodisability* 2014;5:201-213.
5. Norman A. *Journal of Adult Protection* 2016;18:341-352.
6. Flynn M. *Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board* 2016.
7. BISWG and BASW. *Practice guidance for social workers working with people with an Acquired Brain Injury* 2016.

# INSWABI raises the international profile of social work and ABI

## Dr Andy Mantell

The International Network of Social Workers in Acquired Brain Injury (INSWABI) goes from strength to strength raising the international profile of social work in the field of ABI, and ABI in the field of social work.

The organisation recently had a significant ABI-themed stream at the 9th International Conference on Social Work in Health and Mental Health in York. Commenting on the role of the social worker Dr Sue Copstick said: "The relationships we form with families are

transformative". Dr Jeremy Tew, one of the key note presenters argued that there is a need to put the 'social' back into mental health social work. In York, INSWABI certainly did put the 'social' back into ABI social work!

The idea for INSWABI originated at the 2006 Conference for Social Work in Health and Mental Health. From a single ABI symposium in Hong Kong in 2006, INSWABI has increased the profile of social work in ABI at every subsequent conference. This year its contribution in York comprised 24

excellent presentations by speakers from Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, Sweden and the UK (full abstracts are available on [www.inswabi.org](http://www.inswabi.org)). The breadth and quality of research being undertaken was inspiring, with the UK having a stronger than usual presence thanks almost entirely to the work of Dr Mark Holloway, who presented five papers.

Huge thanks go to Professor Dr Grahame Simpson who worked tirelessly on behalf of INSWABI to coordinate the ABI-themed stream.

## Busy year for BASW England

2019 has been a busy year for BASW England. In April BASW held its first joint 80-20 conference in partnership with the University of Sussex, and launched a new kitbag to support social workers working with children and families. As part of its ongoing work in promoting best practice, and to improve working conditions, BASW England has been running a pilot scheme with Croydon Council to implement the principles of the 80-20 campaign.

In June the capabilities statement was launched for social workers working with adults with learning disabilities, and September saw its launch for social workers working with autistic adults. Both pieces of work were commissioned by the Department of Health and Social Care and will provide an invaluable resource for all social workers working within adult social care. These resources are now available online at [www.basw.co.uk/capabilities-statement-social-work-autistic-adults](http://www.basw.co.uk/capabilities-statement-social-work-autistic-adults)

This year has seen the publication of the Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS) for social work, a culmination of many months hard work by BASW England and the PEPS steering group.

In October, BASW hosted its Student and Newly Qualified Social Workers Conference, and the England Annual Conference at Cloth Hall Court, Leeds.

For more information visit [www.basw.co.uk/events](http://www.basw.co.uk/events)

## Masterclass highlights the 'rippling effect of brain injury'

BISWG Trustee Linda Jooste led a successful 60-minute Masterclass entitled 'Brain Injury: the rippling effect' at the BASW England Conference in Leeds in October.

Linda said: "Acquired brain injury has a rippling effect; the injury happens to the individual, but the impact is felt both by family, friends and even the wider community". The Masterclass used case studies, and participants were encouraged to share resources, experiences and ideas in order to understand the impact of brain injury on family members, and to improve their professional practice.

## BISWG

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## New website available

After several years of kindly being hosted by BISWG, INSWABI now has its own website [www.inswabi.org](http://www.inswabi.org) which contains very useful resources and research.