

# Elevating home care: a new provider challenges perceptions

## Care Matters Podcast episode transcript (automated)

### Centre for Care

The Care Matters podcast is brought to you by the ESRC Centre for Care and CIRCLE, the Centre for International Research on Care, Labour and Equalities. In this series, our researchers welcome experts in the field and to those giving or receiving care to discuss crucial issues in social care as we collectively attempt to make a positive difference to how care is experienced and provided.

### Duncan Fisher

Hello and welcome to Care Matters, The podcast from the Economic and Social Research Council's Centre for Care and the University of Sheffield's CIRCLE Research Centre. My name is Duncan Fisher and I am a research associate at the Centre for Care. We are delighted to welcome Suliyat O'Balogun as our guest, and in this episode we will discuss Suliyat's current work, starting a new home care agency and her longer term experiences in adult social care.

The discussion sits in the context of workforce issues and pressures. I will include topics such as sustainability, recruitment and retention values and workplace culture and migration and individual care Biographies. Welcome to Care Matters, Suliyat.

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Thank you Duncan for having me.

### Duncan Fisher

Suliyat O'Balogun is the registered manager of This is Home Care, a domiciliary care agency that she started earlier in 2023. The agency is based in the south of England and Buckinghamshire and covers parts of Herefordshire, too. Suliyat as a qualified social worker and gained her MA from Brunel University. She also holds a B.A. in international studies with economics from the University of Birmingham.

Before starting the agency, Suliyat spent a decade in social work, first in hospital discharge, and then managing a local authority team, supporting adults over the age of 18 with physical learning disabilities and difficulties and mental health issues. She left the post to start the agency and the decision to do so, and the motivations and process behind the change are a key point of discussion in this episode. Again, a warm welcome to you Suliyat.

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Thank you, Duncan. It's a pleasure.

### Duncan Fisher

So, Suliyat if you've recently set up your own home care agency, can you just tell us a little bit about that?

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yes, that's right. So the care agency is called This is Home Care, and we received our CQC registration or made the ninth. And so I actually initially submitted the registration form in February (2023). So it

took approximately 12 weeks. So and, you know, of course, it would have taken lots of research in order to prepare for the registration form.

So I worked in active social services for the past ten years. And so far with it, yes, I did work in hospital and social work as I knew when I moved into the community that I then was exposed to home care providers and also the quality, or should I say lack of quality. And I think it was upon realising that actually this was the norm for the clients that we were supporting in the local authority.

And although from a local authority perspective, we did try to, you know, implement change and work with the providers as there wasn't very much we could do. So it was a case of, you know, telling clients that actually there is really isn't really much, there really isn't much alternatives in, in the community. And then just seeing the gap in the market, just for a provider who would be committed to high quality care.

Duncan Fisher

Thank you. So you mentioned the CQC So that's the Care Quality Commission registration. If mentioned issues there around care quality and also and the gap in the market, sounds like there were some of the key the key things. And so the current state of play is that you've received your registration. And what's happening now in terms of the the agency.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah. So my my intention because I think it's really important that I understand how care works, you know, on the ground. So I do have a background in social work and I have work as a support worker. I do want to also start by supporting the my clients to begin with. So then I start to set the standard.

So I am at the moment looking at and sourcing from some clients privately where I will act as their main carer. I will get to know them, I will set the standard and then hopefully recruit somebody else to take over from me. So I'm really taking on a hands on approach, also wanting to take it slowly. So although I know, I mean the demand is out there, I think from my view it's about, you know, recognising of course it's a business but making sure I'm doing what's necessary to make it work and in the long term as well.

Duncan Fisher

And so at that point, can you just maybe can you maybe just for the benefit of our audience, can you just say a little bit about the setting?

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yes, it's it's a symptom of salary homecare provider. So we'll be supporting adults who have learning physical, mental health and issues as well. And essentially it's to facilitate individuals to remain at home so that could be supporting them with their personal care, meal preparation, administering medication, as well as access in the community. At the same time, we also want to focus on not just the needs of a so is also focusing on on their wants too.

So I strongly believe that you know that despite all, you know health conditions and disabilities, you can always you can lead a fulfilling life, even if it's in the small things. I think that's that's an aspect that I really want to focus on. So it's supporting individuals to lead a fulfilling life.

Duncan Fisher

So in terms of this move, then to start your agency and to leave your previous job, I guess there's two things that have happened there. And firstly, you talked a little bit about your experience as a social

worker and working into local authority and the experience they gave you, But also helped you to see, you know, what was going on, I guess, beyond just working and social work.

So what would you say ultimately shaped your decision to leave the local authority social work role?

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, so I think there's two different levels to this. I think there's definitely a personal level. So I think I would say about four years ago I realised and you know, I did want to progress within social work. So I was committed to, you know, climbing that ladder and, you know, going for the more senior positions and really putting myself out there.

And, you know, through personal development, I understood the importance of facing your fears, challenging your style, and, you know, just seeing opportunities where perhaps others may not and being willing to take the risk. So think, of course, seeing and working very closely with home care providers. It was the understanding actually that is available opportunity plus knowing if you can do a good job of it, then it's it's all set to be a really rewarding industry to work in.

So I think that was one. And then I think ultimately two years ago I did get a promotion in my role and yes, it was really exciting. And you know, the fact that it was only working as a manager within the social work team, but then at the same time it's the acknowledgement to actually, you know, it's like we were always firefighting all the time, you know, shortage of staff, shortage of funding and not really been able to meet the care and support needs of our residents in the way that we would like.

For me, it became much bigger. You know, that drive to go and start my own career to see where hopefully I can have that level of control around the support I can provide people in the community. You know, I can drive that vision. And for me, I thought that that's where the real rewarding work would be rather than in the statutory setting. I worked in a silo.

### Duncan Fisher

And so it sounds like that was a decision maybe that you that is something you've been thinking about over a longer period of time, really, and it's has taken a while to kind of get to this point.

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah. But that, that that's why I think, you know, it's always very scary to leave a secured job and it's a job that at the time I did enjoy. So I did see value in it. I did, you know, enjoy going out, supporting my clients as best as I could and eventually supporting a team. I did enjoy that.

However, at the same time, I just had this real desire to go and do something different. And I think two years ago when I did receive the promotion, at one point I thought, well, maybe I would stay and I would continue to try and climb the ladder. But then I thought, actually, you know, that's always going to be bad.

Why not go off, do something a little bit out of my comfort zone and see where that takes me and realising that actually, you know, the beef industry is all based on, you know, areas are quite linked. So even if perhaps I then if it doesn't work out partying, I can see I can always go back to. So it was, it was, it did take a long time and, and also I did want to ensure I had, you know, enough savings as well.

So I think I know you can start I'm career agency on a shoestring and I hear about it. I think it's wanting to really start off well, wanting to have a strong brand to begin with and really wanting to

invest in the care provided as well as to carers. I hope to then find as well. So it was also preparation work, which for me is a long time, but it did go really quickly.

Duncan Fisher

Was that a difficult decision and the end or straightforward or how would you characterise it?

Suliyat O'Balogun

I would say it was difficult in terms of taking that leg, but once I felt committed to it, it was just something I could not do in a sense. So it was I think it was just I felt the feeling was so overwhelmingly strong to go off and do that, I just couldn't do it really. And, and, and that's why I think sometimes, you know, I think she is like, I perhaps wasn't the right time for me.

That's when I was thinking about actually now it was and I think it was also getting to a point in my role managing a social work team and realising that, you know, things don't really change. The issues are the same issues. And even as I progressed, you know, I'm not really missing anything by going off and doing something else and just giving it a go.

So even if I came back in five, ten years, I don't really think much would have changed within statutory adult social care. And that's because I speak to people who have started, you know, worked perhaps ten years prior to me, 20th prior to me. And they will say, yeah, these are the same issues that I've experienced sort of ten, 15, 20 years later.

Duncan Fisher

So coming back to that point, you know, well, we're interested in in your story and what's happened this year and but I guess what I'm also thinking and it's interesting to hear from you about how that reflects the wider the wider care system, the wider social care sector, if you like. And so would you say that in terms of your experience making this decision and your experience working in this statutory system, what you're mentioning problems and things?

And I think that we know, you know, you've touched upon things like staffing, care quality, but do you think there's anything in terms of your experience here and you're making this decision, you're leaving? Is there anything you think that you know could be learnt from from your experience about this statutory system?

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, I do. I do, because I think I think it's it's really difficult as well because I think, you know, especially in terms of social work people because they go to university, they learn about social work values which are just general social work values. And then I think they even go and work for a statutory social work team and be allowed to implement those views as they and during their studies.

And actually, you know, it doesn't really work like in statutory adult social care, you know, often funding is extremely important and yes, values are key, but it is far distant because I think we're often telling the team if example, an idea as to how to meet a particular client's needs may be effective if it doesn't fall within the the, you know, the funding expectations and it may not pass through.

So I think for a lot of social workers who come out thinking that they're going to make a difference, it's going to be positive. It can kind of leave them feeling a little bit, you know, disillusioned and, you know, questioning actually why if they come into this profession and, you know, it wasn't their expectation that they were going to act as gatekeepers, which again, is part of the role.

So I think is definitely getting that that balance right, too. In terms of performance, you know, course, we're going out where assessing individuals, you know, it's hard to measure yet. I think from a senior management perspective, it's always it's a lot about the numbers and I understand that, you know, numbers are important, but actually they don't really capture the full work of what social workers do.

And again, in terms of feeling valued, it's really difficult. It's really difficult to say to a team, yes, you're doing well, but actually the numbers don't stack up. That I think I think there's a lot I think it's really difficult, I think even from a local authority's perspective to do very much about it takes I think of course in terms of funding investment, again turnover and that's just not turnover in terms of the team, but there's also turnover in terms of senior management, which again often impacts what the vision is, which as middle managers we're having to implement within the team.

And that's just such that so many different other groups that you have to also kind of work with. But the NHS, you know, building those relationships in theory should be fine. Actually in practice, really challenging a part of that would make the social workers job a lot easier, a lot more manageable. So yes, I think I think that there is there is a lot I think in terms of what's real estate is I think it's another.

Duncan Fisher

Score sends out a lot of that in terms of what practically could change would be things like managing expectation of how social workers and maybe a broader system understanding.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, that's it. I definitely think managing the expectations of social workers and in terms of, you know, their expectations of the role and also the expectations of them to within. yeah, you know, it's not just about going out and having those discussions with people and just giving them what they want. It has to be within the framework, within the policies and processes of that, particularly local authority which I find social workers do struggle with because sometimes they conflict with their values and we can see that, but we can't really do and we can't really do very much about that.

And, you know, really good social workers want to continue working and promoting the values in a sense, from a local authority perspective, you know, limited resources. We're sometimes expecting bodies to a degree to be compromised at times. It agency or for funding to override certain values or, you know, well in terms of, you know, costings of packages of care and things like that.

Duncan Fisher

So it sounds like there's issues there or soft constraint and lack or yeah, lack of flexibility in the statutory system, obvious questions around funding and that and it sounds like also that you mentioned that the idea of you having a bit more control in terms of your own yourself and your own work and I guess what you're able to do.

So thinking about the agency, what would you say your aims are for the agency and the work that the agency is going to do?

Suliyat O'Balogun

So I really want to, in my own right, you know, elevate home care. You know, I think home care shouldn't just be about, you know, the task at hand and going in and supporting somebody with just getting most interested. And you go, I think it should be more about really, you know, building that relationship with our clients, but also looking at ways in which we can bring, you know, fulfilment and, and, you know, helping our clients feel maybe content day today, you know, just contributing to their overall happiness is what I hope to achieve.

And, and in terms of having a care agency who truly values the care of us, who doesn't just see us as just the carer or anything like that. So, you know, kind of trying to create that family feel where we don't just say that we value our carers, but we share in practice as well. And even if it's about supporting carers to go on to and do other call other you know, and it's not just, you know, going on to do courses, but even it's just to go and see other jobs, you know, we're fully equipping them in that sense.

We're fully investing in them not just for our own benefit but also for the last to. So I think it's just changing and hopefully in my own way, changing the perception of home care. I think that is and people in that in in the community who continue to struggle day to day because they don't trust by this. And I think that's a real shame.

So it is definitely working on that trust element. And hopefully I aim to do that by showing that I don't overprescribe and also with my knowledge of working within a local authority. I feel I can work in a strengths based way but in a genuine way. So for example, if I went out to assess an individual and they thought I needed some support with their mobility and actually what they might need is an established occupational therapist for and the appropriate equipment in their house.

So they might actually need someone in their home. So looking at it from that perspective, at the same time knowing that that benefits that and the individual so that's yeah that's, that's the hope and you know really just setting an example. So it's going to be hands on. I'm going to be doing a and you know, if I can't do it then I wouldn't want to expect anybody else to say that.

But then also setting the standards high within the care agency in the sense that, yes, we do want to look after our care at St Thomas standards so high. Is it just about going in and doing simply what's on the care? You know, and we do want people who are willing to go that extra mile.

### Duncan Fisher

Thanks. That was really fascinating answer and this can have so much to come back on one of the things I tell that I was really interested that the fact that you said that you're happier, you're you're looking at almost encouraging workers to think about going on to other jobs. You know, there's obviously this equipment and there's really attention issues in the sector.

And so you kind of the natural response to that would be, well, we want people to stay. We want people to stay with us. You you're almost saying why actually, it's more important that, yes, workers themselves in their own, you know, their careers and their progression and their development, I guess.

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah. Yeah, that's it. And I do think that's important because, of course, we want canvas to stay on with us and to, you know, that's what the business is reliant on, you know, people staying with you feel like. Yes. And have but then I think actually I think it's about what we can get as a business. So, you know what?

People will stay with us if we treat people well, if we look after them, if we make them friendly, if there's something in it for them. But I think we also need to make sure from off the air, if we want that, we need to be willing to invest in people. So I think, for example, one of the groups I'm hoping to target will be students.

And even if we are able to secure students, so say two years or three years and they go on to the masses or they go into other industries actually because of their experience or within the agency,

they may be to go and share the word with other potential students. So it's kind of thinking, yes, they may go on.

I'm sure other people will come in because of the culture that we had built, which isn't just about, you know, of course, if we can grow you, that's brilliant. But if it means we can.

Selling, you can go on to other job models or other interests, then we want to be able to do that too, is ensuring, you know, we're investing in people and not just for us. Yes, I think that will probably come back to us, but it's also for the individual, too.

### Duncan Fisher

Yeah, That said, that's really interesting and and it's refreshing as well to to Kenny here and because they can have I think one of the things that you hear on the flip side is, you know, you mentioned about the idea of investing in people. But I think the kind of flip side argument is, why? You know, why would I spend all this time and this energy and this money investing in someone for them to then just leave, you know?

But it's refreshing to hear that you think you're obviously thinking about the you're thinking about the wider care and the health care system, but you're also thinking and that and I guess in in a broader societal sense as well.

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, that's it I think. Yeah, Yeah. Looking at the bigger picture of, you know, we're really investing in people, but it's more just because we want them to stay or, you know, if they don't stay with us, they have to pay back a certain amount of money. I think actually, you know, that sends out a message, you know, what we may think about carers in general when actually if they choose this type of care, the typical individual who becomes a carer probably isn't choosing to to just go from agency to agency would probably like to support the same people day in, day out.

You know, that's probably what a typical someone who chooses to be a carer would appreciate. So I think if, for example, we had an A low retention, then I would be questioning our practice. That's something that I would be looking at internally rather than thinking it's a camera issue.

### Duncan Fisher

And just to there's, there's lots of things, as I say in that. And the question I ask you about the hems are so much I could ask you about that. The other thing I want to just ask you about the you mentioned there was and the idea about people's perceptions of home care. So you mentioned you mentioned this kind of this idea of there being a lack of trust in home care.

And that trust obviously is on a kind of interpersonal level, is very important and care And isn't it care work if you're if you're supporting caring for someone, trust is very important in that interpersonal level. But what makes you say that there's a lack of trust and that's a perception. Have you got any examples? Are you from your take?

### Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, yeah, I do, Yeah. And so, you know, and this is speaking to individuals I spoke to and just in passing a lady who said her parents live in their eighties or late eighties and they're struggling at home together and the reason why they don't have care is because they just don't trust, they don't trust that they will be supported in the way that they want.

And also, you know, through my work as a social worker, as a team manager, you know, frequently hearing complaints about a commission care provider, if it's just around the quality of care, if it's even around feeding, fearful of of carers, you know, feeling like they can't say what they want, you know, fearing repercussion even from that particular carer or from that care provider.

And hearing that, you know, on a on a regular basis. So is that the norm in the area that I operated example that commission can provide that it had a nickname in that area and it wasn't a positive, it wasn't, it was a very negative nickname. Apparently all the residents would define that provider by. But then knowing that if they didn't accept that, they may have to pay it a bit more.

So, you know, people weren't necessarily being provided with that choice to seek support that they would be happy with. And, you know, we know, again, word of mouth, a lot of mouth in terms of if it's a good provider, word of mouth as well, if it's not a very good provider to say yes. I think kind of in terms of anecdotal evidence, just from what I've, you know, conversations I've had of people and also with families, I've been clients themselves, there's often a hesitation to have I'm okay.

### Duncan Fisher

And so one of the other things there that you say, which is about staff, but I suppose in one and certainly a lot of the research that we do in the centre is as conscious of the idea of the quality of the work. The job quality for care workers is very closely linked to the quality of care. See, you said that and we wanted to set standards.

You wanted there to be standards for your care workers to to work by, to abide by, I guess. But how do you mean? How do you how do you plan to go about meeting those standards and maintaining those standards?

### Suliyat O'Balogun

So I think, you know, everything I'm hopeful is, you know, aspirational. And I think I'll be committed to continuously improving throughout. I say knowing that we can always get better and that that's always going to be the aim. You know, for me personally, it would be offering that high quality care will always be depending on that person that you're supporting.

You know, it's about getting to know the individual, their likes and, you know, and just communicating with them on a level that they're happy with. So again, it's listening to them and not putting your own views onto them or your own expectations. But that's what I'm hoping to start off with. But then also kind of noting it down.

So then it's something that I can pass on to other carers, you know, in a sense provide a script. So it's kind of, you know, if I go into somebody's house, you might ask them to take your shoes off. Yeah, these are the sorts of things that you think everyone would ask, but actually doesn't always happen. And I went to go and see a potential client last week and that was one of the questions I asked.

And she said, I think you know, no one has asked that before and you just think it's just having that building, that relationship. I think, you know, certainly expectations, but I think it's kind of recording this information and not in the sense of a script where people were still very wedded in that I can't, you know, put my own style on there.

But I think it would be okay, this is what you do when you go into somebody's house. This is what you do when you carry out an assessment. So then people understand that this is the expectation and it isn't just you carry out an assessment, but this is how you or these are the questions or, you know, this is the information we need.



So it's been through the specific way that but making sure it's information that I can then share with potential carers with a potential manager coming in, for example.

Duncan Fisher

Thank you very much. So in all, before we before we come to the end, just I'd play to rewind a little bit and talk about your own biography, your own experiences of the care work environment, I guess. So you initially you said that your mother, your mother was a care worker. Can you tell me a bit about your mother care work and so of her and to how she became a care worker And I guess.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, definitely so. My mum, she lived in the UK in the late eighties and I think in the mid nineties and got into care work and I think it was just one of those jobs at the time, just very easy to get and she could get work locally as well and she didn't need to have a card, She could go around and visit and pay her clients and come back home.

So you know, it is quite a time it was a job that she could do around the children. And actually she used to take me along with her as well to visit to, you know, go and see some of her clients who you lacked children to. And I guess that was essentially my first flavour of homecare. So seeing my mum do it.

Yeah. And then also hearing about her experiences in the job too. So she did Home Care for Beau only about 15 years. And then she went into Supported Living, which is where struck me is as a carer to.

Duncan Fisher

And so how long as your mum worked and social care until then?

Suliyat O'Balogun

So I would say she's probably between 25 to 30 as she has. Yeah. So, so for the majority of her, of her working career in the UK.

Duncan Fisher

Okay. And so you said that you sometimes accompanied your mother when on our, on our home carers as well. What was that like for you, What were your memories of that.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah. Yeah. So I mean I was, I was never supposed to and I don't think, you know, if something was anything that was allowed at the time, but, and someone would take me to go and see her and clients. So some of the ones who were more able and I would let she just go with her, I wouldn't be do any of the work.

I would just sit and have a chat or listen, interact with the clients. I think I must have been about only ten, maybe 12 or 13 around that age and that that's it. But it was very interesting because I would just upset that my mum was staring for the clients and I wasn't at the time it seemed happy if my mum was dying and all, you know, little things that perhaps other carers being there or other individuals and potentially not listening to what the client may have wanted in that moment, just recognising that think because that thing is sincere.

I think, you know, lots of people are carers and might not next shared those values in listening to the individual that they're supporting. So yeah, so sometimes I did, did see that too.

Duncan Fisher

And so then you told me that this, this can have influenced your idea to think about doing care yourself, but initially your mother was a bit resistant.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, that's right. So I think when I turned 60, I was, you know, desperate to work, desperate to get a job. And I thought, actually, home care, I think I really enjoy that. It's like I can go and, you know, support people at home and also just listen to that being I do like listening to people's stories. I like having, you know, conversations with people.

So I thought it would be perfect. But my mum, she was just so dead against it. And she, she just thought, no way, you can't deny you can't do it. I think for her I think she just is more, you know, I had to do this and because I've come to this country, that's a very limited education and limited opportunities in have you say for her it is more you know, she didn't want to see her own children perhaps go down that route.

I think that was her and her perception and fair. I think I do remember the time when I was Nikki. I think you did have to have a degree of experience as forward if you had to have about a year or two. So this was in, I would say, the mid 2000. So around the 2004, 2005, you know, you had to have experience.

You know, I think things have changed since then. But, you know, I think you did have to. But this year will take experience but yeah know so it is it's interesting I think even perception of care amongst those who are carers T you know so so it's not just I guess people are outside to perceive it as a low status role for people in, in, in the job as well.

Duncan Fisher

And Sue, you said the year your mother came and then in the 1980s and that was from Dallas, from Nigeria that came to her to the UK. Okay. And, and she started and so there was there was an issue there that, that she maybe there weren't so many opportunities or had a care was one of the main opportunities for someone in her position at that time.

Suliyat O'Balogun

That to get to get a job. Yeah. Yeah. Got there and you know sometimes these are, you know things perhaps people just assume, you know, I don't know how hard my mum tried to do other interests and things. I think from her view, you know, coming in as an immigrant and you know, not with much and financial back then, not much education at all.

You know, my mum's level of English is, you know, yes, she can speak English, she can learn English to a basic level. So I think perhaps she felt that that this was or this was this was this was a job she could get and that that was it. So, you know, if, for example, I ever asked her mum, did you ever want to progress in, in, in your, in your role, she would perhaps respond, no, that's not really for people like me. She simply also for people like her to even try and progress in her current in in her role.

Duncan Fisher

And so you mentioned the you know, when you were 16, you were you saw it leaked to the what myself your mother was just I think you said to me that you entered that retail and then you've you know, you've studied so you studied at Birmingham University, but then you I guess you've come you've come back to you come by road to social care.

You know, you've got your degree in international studies with economics. You said it had civil service experience as well. So why do you think why do you think you've kept coming back?

Suliyat O'Balogun

And I just think I just I really do enjoy working with people directly, with people. I think I love having that interaction and, and I've always wanted to work with people who were disadvantaged in society. And I think that's probably just in my background, you know, and it kind of coming from a disadvantaged area and where I grew up.

So I've always been quite passionate about that. And I think when I finished from uni I did and I did do an internship with the Civil Service and I felt, you know, policy again, you know, you're not really getting that interaction, that direct contact with the people wanting to have that positive impact with. And then I did look at charities and I think that was around 2008, 2009 when I graduated, and I think that was the time of my funding was being I did some work with a refugee council, which I absolutely loved, but in funding was being cut, it's quite clear people were really fearful, you know, around what jobs they were going to

get. And I think that was the time. And I thought, well, you know, adult social care, becoming the social worker, working with adults specifically, I thought, you know, why a you know, why not give that if that will go? I think my fear was always working around statutory because, you know, I was always quite used to being the person working for charities and watching those letters, urging housing, urging social services to do more things.

Going on to the other side where, you know, we're now also at the gate. Keep in a sense, that was the that was the part I thought I would find most challenging. Yeah. So that starts I think it's it's more having that direct interaction with and with the clients that I'd want to work with.

Duncan Fisher

Okay, Thanks so much. That's another really interesting. And so, you know, there's this there's obviously this bigger in there's this whole bigger picture around care. But, you know, obviously it's that kind of interpersonal interaction that means a lot to you. And it sounds like that's going to be really important to you. And to your agency and the work of your agency.

So just want to ask a final question before we wrap things up. And that again and again is good and maybe it's come back again. That's good. And the bigger thing about, you know, so and the Centre for Care and the research I'm doing is about the care workforce in the UK. And so I'd just like to ask your kind of views and not in general about the future of the care workforce. Do you see any cause for optimism? It's quite a bleak picture terms as things like the numbers.

Suliyat O'Balogun

Yeah, I mean I, I think it's such a, it's a difficult one and it will be a huge challenge, I think. Chancellor optimism. I think there is possibility for optimism. But I think as you know from a care provider now, from that perspective, I think it's about looking internally now and reviewing how we value our carers and whether or not we really do.

So I think, you know, I don't think the actual job itself is the reason why, but I think it's quite easy to say, well carers don't want you know, no one wants to do the job, but I actually think it's reviewing our own practices as a care provider and ensuring that well, or really thinking about what are we doing to to make it a comfortable and enjoyable and viable job for people rather than just expecting carers to accept how it is.

So I think the owners should be put more so on us as individual care providers, see what we can do. And I think if we and I think that's why, you know, it causes the private sector and that's why it's difficult. I think there does need to be more joined up work with the local authority. Yeah, I don't know.

It's a difficult one, but I think that it does need to be more joined up if we do want to see difference. I think the Government need to prioritise the adult social care agenda, but at the same time I think like, you know, care providers can't just rely on the government. I think we need to be doing more either collectively and individually to that because, you know, I think in terms of going out into people's homes, especially home care, I don't think I think people may also have an issue with the with the environment that they're working in, with the stress, with the pressures rather than the actual job itself.

You know, yes, there are parts of it which are challenging, but I think it's more the environment in which they work in that that's difficult and it could be expectation that they have to go see ten clients in one day or expectation of picking up and shifts at the last minute every day. Those are the sorts of things which turning people away in and out, they can be unavoidable.

But that's what I think we need to be working on, so that when people do come in, those aren't the parts that that that turn people away.

[Duncan Fisher](#)

Thank you very much for that. And Cecilia, it's very interesting point in which to finish so and thank you thank you very much for four more episodes and the Care Matters series and to learn more about the Centre for Care, please follow the link in the episode description for a website and social media channels. All that remains for me to do is to thank our guest, Suliyat again.

So thank you very much, Suliyat.

[Suliyat O'Balogun](#)

Thank you.