

Paul Emerson: A brief biography

After finishing my A levels I worked for 6 months as a volunteer with the Simon Community in Glasgow. Following this, I completed a four year degree in applied Social Studies with Certificate of Qualification in Social Work (CQSW).

My first job post qualification was working at a day centre for service users with mental health problems; running various groups, including setting up a Coping with Voices Group.

After four years I moved to London and worked for 13 years at the START team. This is a statutory mental health team working with service users who are street homeless or living in hostels. Whilst working there I qualified as an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP) and a Best Interest Assessor. As well as working on the AMHP rota I periodically would organise and be involved with Mental Health Act Assessments for rough sleepers on the street.

Following a Serious Case review into the death of a rough sleeper in 2011 I was employed as the manager for the Saving Lives Project funded by Lambeth Council and the Greater London Authority. The aim of the project was to develop tools around the application of mental health legislation in relation to rough sleepers, in particular a Mental Capacity Act screening tool.

In my current job I work as a Senior Practitioner for a local authority AMHP team. As well as completing Mental Health Act Assessments, and Best Interest Assessments under the DOLS procedure, I also help to develop policies and procedures in relation to the application of the Mental Health Act and the Mental Capacity Act. As part of this role I have delivered training on the application of the Mental Health Act to colleagues and the police.

I have also worked for the Open University, as an associate tutor on their Social Work programme. As part of the Saving Lives Project I have developed and delivered extensive training on the screening tools to voluntary sector workers, AMHPs and the Police.