

SCHOOL OF
SOCIAL SCIENCES & PROFESSIONS

LONDON
METROPOLITAN
UNIVERSITY


THE

LONDON MET'S **SOCIAL WORK** STUDENT NEWSLETTER

THE SOCIAL WORK NEWSLETTER #7 ● MAY 2023

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Welcome

Welcome to the 7th edition of the , the iconic publication co-produced with social work students. The Loop is a termly vehicle for students to use to share their views, not just of the social work course, but other issues of interest both within and without of the university. The Loop will be a platform to share news and events from The North East London Teaching Partnership, and the teaching, learning and research interests and activities of the academic team and wider colleagues.

The Editorial Team would encourage and welcome contributions from students and staff for the next edition. Please be a part of this exciting initiative.

Your newsletter. Your voice.

Editorial Team

Jessica-Rose McMullins

Final Year BSc Student

Cindy Martin

First Year MSc Student

Donna Jones

Head of Social Work

Know your Social Work student reps

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Level 4

Thomas McInnes
Amelia Jameel

Level 5

Samantha Halil
Emma Birbeck

Level 6

Jessica-Rose McMullins
Babra Mbabzi

MSc

Level 7.1 (1st year)

Melissa Namwanje
Gloria Mputu

Level 7.2 (2nd year)

Moya Biggs
Alice Wood

Your student reps are here to represent your cohort's views at formal meetings like the Course Committee Meetings that happen once a term or informally via the Open Door! that has been set up for each cohort. They will highlight any concerns to the Course Leads and also share with the academic team when things are going well. They are in regular contact with the Course Leads, so do please let them know if there are things you feel we need to know!

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course leads

LOTS OF LITTLE FISH CAN CHANGE A BIG POND

BY RACHEL BELL

Throughout my time at university, and especially on my final placement, I found that study and placement did not align at times, and my perception of Social Work was not the reality in practice.

No one tells you throughout studies and in lectures that, for example, finances and budgets are incorporated in an adult statutory setting and play a vital role. No one tells you that, at times, what you feel is the best opinion for the service user may be declined by the Service Manager due to cost. No one tells you that a service user may refuse a care package because they are over the threshold of funds and do not want to finance their own care. You may feel trapped by bureaucracy; you may feel like a gatekeeper, and you may feel like the voice of the state.

The module International Relationship Based Practice for Social Change has changed my opinion. The module has allowed me to discuss big ideas and understand that change can occur within the system, and little acts can be that change.

Social change feels big; it feels impossible and daunting. Acting upon ideas around social change makes you feel like a little fish in a big pond.

The International Relationship Based Practice for Social Change module has given me a toolkit and the understanding that little changes - little radical changes - can make a difference. Incorporating ideas, such as Ubuntu, Poverty Aware Social Work, Deaf Awareness, Social Pedagogy, and Radical Social Work, into practice can create change.

Social change doesn't happen quickly, and it doesn't happen overnight. However, by including ideas in practice, you are making a change. You are the change you want to see, and you are using your value base to give a voice to service users.

The International Relationship Based Practice for Social Change module has allowed me to understand that when you feel alone in practice and frustrated and feel that you are not an advocate but a gatekeeper, you are truly not. Other professionals think the same, and you are challenging the norm to make a change by incorporating ideas.

The International Relationship Based Practice for Social Change module made me realise that lots of little fish can change a big pond over time.



KATRIN BAIN
MODULE LEAD



FREE LONDON

As some of you may know I often spend a Sunday or on occasions a weekday undertaking what I refer to as a 'free London' event. What I mean by this is an event in London which has no entry fee. For me these events provide me with an opportunity to explore topics which are both of interest to me, and are ideally represented in either a visual or audio form. I find considering topics in this medium can often be really refreshing after reading lots of text and yet at the same time, provide thought provoking, learning and reflective opportunities.

Anyway, I recently came across these two events which I would like to share with you as they look interesting and thought provoking.

They are exhibitions you might want to enjoy with family, friends, or as an opportunity to meet with your fellow students during the summer break.

If you do go I would love to hear your feedback.

Photography exhibition:

Philip Cunningham's "Lost East End" From 20 April, 2023



April 20, 2023

Photographer Philip Cunningham's exhibition of people, places and community activism in 1970s East London.

Full details of this event can be located via this link:

<https://www.oxfordhouse.org.uk/event/exhibition-lost-east-end/>

Encouraged by his tutor, Philip took hundreds of photographs of the people and places around him. He captured striking portraits of neighbours, friends, forgotten pubs, community activism and everyday life in East London. Many of the images on display in the exhibition have not been seen in over 50 years and following his popular Youth of Yesterday exhibition, we are delight for Philip's work to return to Oxford House.

© All Images: Philip Cunningham

Open Monday – Friday, 10am – 5pm

Free Entry Oxford House Café

Science Museum

Mental Health Exhibition

This exhibition explores how mental health has been constructed over time and, life within Victorian mental asylums. It is a permanent exhibition so will be available over the summer. This exhibition has links to the content within the Lifespan Development module and more widely in terms of the relationship between how different states of health and illness are constructed and responded to.



What is mental illness and how do people with mental illnesses fit into society? These are the questions that have influenced mental healthcare and treatment for centuries.

Full details of the exhibition can be located via this link:

<https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/objects-and-stories/mental-health>

Again if you go to see this exhibition do please give me feedback.

Hazel Cutts, MSc Course Lead



Image by Freepik

CINDY MARTIN SPEAKS TO NANA YABBEY-HAGAN

*To get an insight into Social Work **Cindy Martin** speaks to **Nana Yabbey-Hagan**, a Social worker who has been in practice for nearly 10 years and now manages his own team in frontline child protection and also is a Practice Educator as well as an AYSE assessor.*

He is also one half of the duo on The Social Worker and The Mentor, a podcast created by Nana and his co-host Robert. They use their podcast platform to speak about important issues ranging from burnout to conversations around the crisis of staffing in Social Care.

C: What made you want to become a social worker and was it always the career path you were going towards?

N: My family's background is in Social care, my mum works in Social care alongside my sister and my brother is also in his last year to be qualified.

When I was young my mum would say that she could see me in this role, as I am a very social person and so I always knew I would do the role. When I was 16, I worked in my borough to gain experience before I started university and Social Work for me was my avenue.

C: As a young black male, have you felt there have sometimes been obstacles you had to face being within the Social Work profession?

N: In terms of career progression, it definitely has because Social Work is very much a female

ran profession and there are not a lot of men in Social Work. You do not tend to see a lot of black men and I think particularly in leadership arenas I think it's getting better but there is still equalities. I am aware of these barriers and the other side of this is that when I have worked with young people, they have liked that they have had a young black male they could relate to. But yes there are barriers to black males progressing, there are loads of black women who are team managers and service managers. I feel that I have a street Social Work approach and I know in corporate, people do not tend to like that but this is relationship-based working and it's a new way of working.

C: How do you feel about the current news about people who are from ethnic minorities not passing their AYSE year and what do you think the reason is for this?

N: I do think a lot of it is to do with the inequalities within Social Work and it filters down to cultural barriers as well. I think sometimes things to do with culture impact a lot, in terms of students being able to work and the relationships they have with their Practice Educators. There is a high number of students who are from black and ethnic minority groups, who are not passing and a lot of the time they have spoken about cultural classes. Is this to do with their Practice Educator, not understanding what they are

going through and what I think for me is that it is down to a lack of representation within the sector as a whole. There is not enough racial diversity among assessors and senior leaders, so how are they going to be able to promote inclusion and support NQSW's? It is also about unconscious bias, do the assessors have an unconscious bias against Social Workers who are from black and ethnic minority groups?

C: As a NQSW or a Social Worker doing AYSE, how important is it to find your voice and how would they be able to do this?

N: One of the things I say to students or anybody, is that irrespective of the level that you are in always need to find your voice. How you challenge things are in forums or when you are in supervision. When I have had students that I have assessed, I have told them that you need to be able to challenge me and it is not something that can be taught. You will actually have to grow with confidence, and a part of that is putting yourself in spaces that make you feel uncomfortable. This is not uncomfortable as in putting yourself at risk but, having uncomfortable conversations and then reflecting on why you are having them. At every single level of Social Work, you should be questioning things because having uncomfortable conversations is a way to build your resilience.

C: You must come across some very emotional cases, how do you separate yourself from the case once you get home?

N: When you build good relationships with the family it can be hard and Social Work for me is not just a job you are working with people. It's about taking time out and one thing about this job is that we do not take time out!!! In my early years, I never took time for myself and you need to find a balance between Social Work and your home life. If you don't it becomes emotionally draining, this job is not easy and is very taxing on you as you have a lot of stuff to deal with.



C: Listening to your podcasts you have said that you would like to change how Social work is currently taught, why do you think there needs to be a change? What changes would you like to be seen?

N: So for me, the modules that are taken in university need to be more applicable, the reason why I say that is because I feel they are very generic and they do not prepare you for the real-life expectations of a Social Worker. You need to be aware of burnout, high caseloads, the lack of resources, how to keep yourself and how to do an assessment.

C: You have started a petition to support reviews into attacks on Social Workers and the deaths too, why do you think the media is very silent towards these attacks? What would you like the outcome to be too?

N: The media are silent because they do not respect what we do!! The narrative of Social Services outweighs our safety, the fact we take children away overrides everyone's thinking even when we do a good job. Part of my petition is that I want the government to put practice reviews in place because it needs to make our job safe! I have incidents where a young person has raised a knife to me on a home visit, I have been pushed by a young person and I

have colleagues who have been attacked too. So having the government provide legislation there, provides us with a level of protection.

C: So, many students are about to embark on their first placements what would be your advice to us?

N: On your first placement is where you are finding your feet, what you need to make sure you do a lot of shadowing, get to know your service, get to know your areas and ask plenty of questions. Make sure you utilise your supervision properly and whatever work you do, make sure you reflect on what PCF model or what domain it is in line with. You also need to make sure you are proactive and seeking learning opportunities. Do not be waiting for you're Practice Educator to be offering them to you, as that means there is not a sense of urgency from you. Do not be complacent, make sure you network and also utilise any in-house training your placement can provide. Walk do not run, learn the trade and do not do the portfolio late!!! Do things in an organised way, so it is early, it's structural and so you give yourself time and space to rectify any mistakes

C: If you could go back to the start of your Social work journey, what advice would you of given yourself?

N: Take your time!! I wanted to be thrown in the deep end and was in court the month after I started my AYSE, but this gave me my experience and resilience.

Walk do not run!!!

CINDY MARTIN SPEAKS TO KAREN BUDD

After graduation and the excitement has settled, it will be time to think about the future and possibly apply to do your AYSE. This is a 12-month programme that is employer-led and supports Newly Qualified Social Workers (NQSWs), AYSE you will have supervision to review your work and assessments to complete. Some NQSWs, unfortunately, do not pass their AYSE, this is three times more prominent if you are from a black and ethnic minority. To get insight into this problem we speak to Karen Budd, who may be familiar to some MSc students as she teaches a session on the Readiness for Direct Practice module.

C: Hi Karen, really appreciate you taking the time to speak to me. Firstly could you just tell me a bit about your background in Social Work?

K: I originally qualified as a nurse at the Wolfson School of Nursing. During this time, I worked mainly in the medical ward but also specialised in caring for students with leukaemia. Having worked in many medical and social wards, I was always concerned about what happened to patients post-discharge. This inspired my interest in health and social care roles in the community. As a result, I then went on to study social work. My career spanned several local authorities; LBHF, West Sussex and Brighton. I worked predominantly in complex court cases concerning child and child protection.

C: Do you currently practice or just teach mainly now?

K: Mainly teach and support students and ASYE's

C: What are your current thoughts on the higher percentage of ethnic minorities failing AYSE? What do you think is the cause of this?

K: I think there are a few reasons for this, but please bear in my mind this is only my opinion.

- There are around 5 (maybe fewer) black professors within Social work education. There is also a lack of representation in middle and higher management posts, so therefore decisions may be based on bias and stereotypes.
- The curriculum is highly Eurocentric.

- There has been limited work completed in terms of decolonising the curriculum, marking and assessment processes
- There is a lack of inclusive teaching, particularly around international students. When ethnic minorities qualify, those assessing them also fail to consider their specific needs.
- There have been significant concerns around unconscious bias and micro-aggressions that we know about, and they're no clear processes and procedures for both students and qualified workers to raise concerns.
- Prior to George Floyd, Anti-racist teaching at university level was totally absent, and replaced with AOP and ADP.
- There is an intersection between ethnicity and learning needs that are not always considered as part of the assessment process.

C: It has been reported men that who are of ethnic minorities had a failure rate of 8.1%, why do you think the rate is higher for men?

K: I am not sure, but I think the same issues apply as outlined above.

Perhaps it could be that there are fewer men in the profession, particularly in relation to men of ethnic minoritized backgrounds. It is possible that this leads to higher levels of bias.

C: What changes do you think need to happen, to even the playing field for all ethnicities and genders?

- A greater presence of ethnic minoritized individuals who are gatekeepers, academics and in management.
- More input in relation to anti-racist practice
- More conversations around race and marginalized groups.
- Research about the available data
- More open spaces around allyship
- An openness and willingness to confront and challenge racism and discrimination. Hence, safe spaces and channels need to be developed.

C: Do you think these changes will ever be implemented? Or do you think the percentage will increase over time?

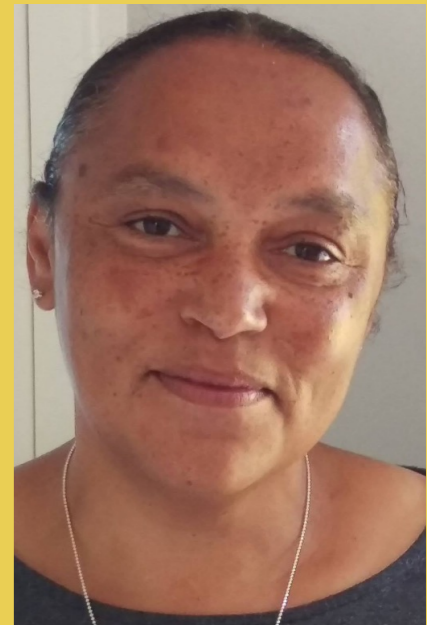
K: I hope they do, but if there is no commitment to change, it is unlikely. For some, racism is more than a buzzword.

C: Do you have any tips or words of wisdom that could provide for a successful AYSE?

K: Know the paperwork/documentation If they are specific learning needs – it is important to share this at the outset

Speak out and challenge

Disrupt the silence!!!



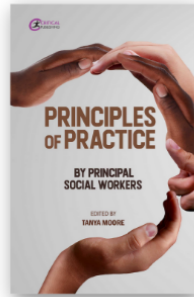
Join us!
The Rainbow Room is open all day!
Lunchtime Socials Tuesdays 12-2pm T1-01 next to The Junction



Social Work

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Principles of Practice by Principal Social Workers, Tanya Moore (Ed.)

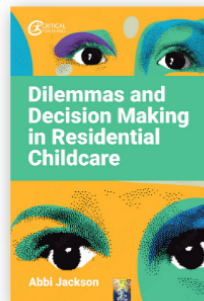
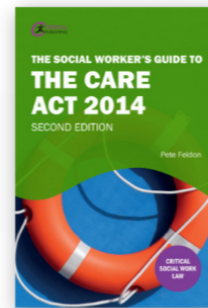
Principal Social Workers are highly skilled and experienced professionals who lead and support social work practice and develop new social workers and social care practitioners. They are senior managers but also remain actively involved with frontline practice so they can report on the views and experiences of practitioners at all levels. Their experience and knowledge is a hitherto untapped goldmine. This book will give food for thought to any social worker or social work care practitioner.

£16.99 | March 2023 | PB | 170pgs | Critical Publishing | ISBN: 9781915080950

The Social Worker's Guide to the Care Act 2014, Pete Feldon

This best-selling book helps social workers gain a comprehensive understanding of how to achieve best practice in applying the Care Act 2014. It is the most significant piece of legislation for adults who have social care needs. It is particularly important for social workers, as it sets out the legislative context for the core social work processes that apply to all adults. This substantially revised 2nd edition incorporates learning from judicial reviews, decisions of the Ombudsman and research.

£29.99 | May 2023 | PB | 328pgs | Critical Publishing | ISBN: 9781913453053



Dilemmas and Decision Making in Residential Childcare, Abbi Jackson

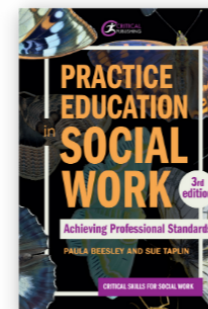
Adopting a case study approach, this book contains a collection of stories of good practice told from the point of view of the residential care worker that help to demonstrate how they deal with dilemmas and make effective decisions in the moment. The perfect guide for new workers entering residential childcare.

£14.99 | January 2023 | PB | 126pgs | Critical Publishing | ISBN: 9781915080806

Practice Education in Social Work, Paula Beesley and Sue Taplin

This best-selling book is an invaluable guide for social workers undertaking learning and assessment to gain and maintain Stage 1 or 2 qualified practice educator status and for those involved in facilitating the mentoring, learning, support, assessment and CPD of practice educators. The 3rd edition is fully updated to reflect the changing social work placement landscape and the BASW refreshed (2022) Practice Educator Professional Standards (PEPS).

£26.99 | June 2023 | PB | 240pgs | Critical Publishing | ISBN: 9781915713094



A Family Guide to Living Well with Dementia, Liz Leach Murphy and Jayna Patel

Gain the knowledge and insight you need to support your loved one with dementia to live life as they wish. It takes the practical approaches and tools provided in *Living a Good Life with Dementia: A practitioner's guide* (9781914171567; Dec 21; £24.99) and applies them to the family context to help families support a loved one with dementia.

£18.99 | March 2023 | PB | 204pgs | Critical Publishing | ISBN: 9781915713063

PLAYLISTS FOR REBELLION

TO BE ALIVE: NOT JUST THE CARCASS
BUT THE SPARK.

THAT'S CRUDELY PUT, BUT...
IF WE'RE NOT SUPPOSED TO DANCE,
WHY ALL THIS MUSIC?

As we get to the last part of the academic year, memories run through my head about all those years I struggled to meet all the self-imposed expectations and deadlines. It has taken me years piled on years to notice the true and essential parts of my work, my life and my passions that keep me going. For sure, these are not unique to me. Drawing on Instagram posts and tiktok trends it is obvious to see people managing time effectively, productively...or not. I feel I fall short combining a steadfast relentless unending to do list with all life's mandates. I am sure I am not the only one.

So I rebel to that idea, sometimes being antagonistic, sometimes just surviving, but I do not listen. I prove to myself that my life has more value than what I am doing. But if I ever doubt, I remind myself that it is about getting joy out of the things I choose to do and that I am choosing to do them. I make the activities part of me and I use music for that.

I have so many playlists in Spotify that are used, explicitly, for particular activities, I just wanted to share a couple of them with you.

The first one is a calm and nice background music for when I am studying. Since it is quite easy to get distracted with sounds and noise, I find a quiet

place, put my headphones on and disappear into the work. I use this almost every day.

https://open.spotify.com/playlist/36CP4yY15c0Gmt_dKhfYBOf?si=1ccce1f19b774826

The second, is the one I use at home when I am getting ready to go out. This is quite a spanish-language based playlist, so if you are not ready for spanish/latin american sounds with strong drums and bases and fun loving lyrics, this may not be for you. Some of these songs are quite old but somehow remind me of home, and they are sparse throughout the list.

<https://open.spotify.com/playlist/6NvbadDRdxTOigKV7z5PJw?si=8463e244f2d54cb4>

Give it a go, let's see if it makes you move. And rebel...with a good soundtrack!

Elsa

YOUTH PRACTITIONERS VISITING LONDON MET

Students on the BSc Youth Studies course have expressed an interest in meeting more 'industry experts' and hearing from practitioners with lived experiences of developing youth and community organisations or working with young people. Dr Julius Elster, the course lead for the BSc Youth Studies programme has facilitated a few events where students get the chance to meet and discuss different aspects of the 'youth sector.' One of these events took place in March when Youth Studies students and staff had the opportunity to hear from Aaliyah and Kianu, who are the founders *Dipped In Creativity Engagement* (DICE), and Yemi, who runs the *Trailblazers Mentoring* programme at HMP Brixton. In addition to sharing their journey as youth workers and business owners, Aaliyah, Kianu and Yemi facilitated discussions around

good youth work practice and the importance of taking underlying factors into account when we work with, or attempt to understand, young individuals.

Several positive outcomes have emerged from this event. Youth Studies students are taking advantage of job and volunteer opportunities at both DICE and *Trailblazers*; and have signed up to 'mentoring youth offenders' training with Yemi at HMP Brixton, with the aim of becoming qualified mentors working with *Trailblazers* in the future. A tour of HMP Brixton is lined up for end of May and September.



30-31 Transcending Resilience
SANDRA VACCIANI



Experienced Youth Practitioners Visiting London Met

The Rainbow Room is open all day!
Lunchtime Socials Tuesdays 12-2pm T1-01 next to The Junction
Join us!

THE RAINBOW ROOM IS OPEN!



Third-year BA Photojournalism student Bianca Jashnani reports from the opening of London Met's Rainbow Room.

Date: 27 February 2023

The colours of the rainbow flag show the diversity of the LGBTQIA+ community and the broad, beautiful spectrum of gender and human sexuality. So it was no surprise that London Met's first queer safe space, which opened to huge fanfare last week, has been dubbed The Rainbow Room.

Officially opening its doors for the first time on 23 February, the Rainbow Room is the brainchild of Donna Jones, Head of Social work, who came up with the idea three years ago as 'a safe and inclusive space where LGBTQIA+ students can be'.

It's "really important that we are visible, that students feel that we are visible and that the university supports that visibility", said Donna, who worked tirelessly to see her idea come to fruition. She was prompted by the fact that

there has been "a lot of discussion around how we didn't hear the LGBTQIA+ students" at the University.

At the grand opening more than 50 supporters packed into the room, just off the Junction café in T-101 on the Holloway Campus, which has been newly decorated with lavender couches, colourful beanbags and wall decorations where staff have written about which LGBTQIA+ authors have inspired them most. Students and staff donated LGBTQIA+ themed books as part of a "Bookshelf Social" and discussed their experiences and memorable moments to celebrate LGBTQIA+ History Month.

The Rainbow Room "demonstrates our commitment to equality within the LGBTQIA community", said Vice-Chancellor Professor Lynn Dobbs, who gave a short talk to commemorate the occasion. Under her leadership, London Met has climbed 289 places in the Stonewall Workplace Equality Index, reaching 162 this year, and has been awarded a bronze award for its work to create a more

inclusive workplace.

Lynn added that London Met is 'pioneering' in its approach to building a community. "It makes me proud that we have produced a culture that allows people to celebrate. The fact that the University set the ground roots and then it [the Rainbow Room] was organised by individuals is fabulous," she said.

"I have two sons who are both gay. I am immensely proud of them and feel passionate about the agenda."

Brian Tutt, Head of Student Experience and Academic Outcomes, School of Social Sciences and Professions and co-head of the LGBTQIA+ Staff Network, said having a physical place to meet will help give the queer community a specific focus within the university. "It is going to be a great resource and we want everyone to use it," he said.

"For the first time, we've got a dedicated space where students and staff members of the LGBT community, and also colleagues and partners outside in the community, can gather together informally and socially in a safe space."

As the university is embedded within the local community, Donna added that she wants the local community to also be able to access the Rainbow Room's resources, support, and space.

"It shows that London Met really cares about queer folks and it is just not a matter of putting it in websites and forgetting about it," said Avi Ben-Zeev, Senior Lecturer in Psychology, who is trans and recently moved to London Met from San Francisco State University.

"Everything here about EDI (Equality, Diversity and Inclusion) could sound like a slogan, but actually, having the resources having the community is heart-warming. It is a beautiful community place."

Students were on board as well, listening to staff explain which books they chose for the bring and borrow bookshelf, and eating a selection of treats provided by the university, including smoked salmon, sticky chicken skewers, and vegetarian spring rolls.

Ana Brito, a student activist assistant at the Students' Union, running for VP of Equity and Welfare at LMU, said the initiative is "fantastic" and finds it incredible to have a safe space for marginalised groups after three years of setting the groundwork.

Gaia Cardone, 21, a Criminology student running for VP activities, said, "I feel it is a great space; I think people will be comfortable here. Having something so inclusive is amazing, and we can do events such as art and craft, talks, and workshops to get more people involved





@LondonMetSW
@NELSWTeaching

To contribute to the next newsletter, contact

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