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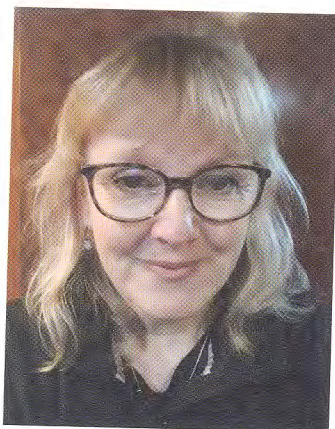
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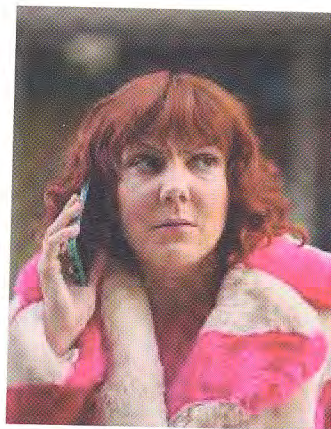
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From the Editor
SHAHID NAQVI



The blame game in which we all ultimately lose

Ailsa Pearce's article on page 16 is uncomfortable reading. It is also important reading.

For it's a measured account from a committed, competent and professional social worker who has served in child protection for 20 years – way longer than most.

Now, however, she's leaving because she's had enough of the blame culture. As she says: "Every child protection social worker has to learn what it is like to spend 24 hours a day, 365 days a year with the nagging fear that a child is being abused, or may even die, on their watch."

We have all seen how this can play out in public, most awfully after the death of Peter Connolly in 2008 and the politically-driven vilification of social workers in Haringey and the authority's then head of children's services Sharon Shoesmith (see page five).

That, as is well documented, led to risk-averse practice and an increase in families investigated and children coming into care.

The continuing presence of blame cultures and a lack of understanding that social work isn't an exact science anymore than preventing terrorism is remains an issue. It also, ironically, makes children less safe by creating a more unstable workforce. This is something policymakers should reflect upon and seek to address.

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**Printed by: PCP Ltd, Haldane,
Halesfield 1, Telford, TF7 4QG**

Published by The British Association of Social Workers
The views expressed in this magazine are not necessarily those of the Association.

The paper used in this publication is sourced from sustainable forests.

ISSN 1352-3112. ©BASW 2021

BASW
The professional association for social work and social workers