

February 2008 'Caring Works' - Social Care event for Wokingham and Reading Aimhigher schools

'Caring Works' was an event organised by 'Aimhigher' for year 10 students to give them a flavour of careers in the Social Care field. Spotlight On Diversity opened the event with a performance about a teenager, Oliver, and the way his life changes when he is hit by a car, sustaining a serious head injury. Oliver's injury leaves him with a mobility impairment, which may be permanent, and a temporary short-term memory loss. Oliver and his family are very keen for him to return home but they will need a great deal of support from various Health, Social Care and Education professionals to make this happen. The aim of the performance was to introduce Oliver's scenario in an interesting and accessible way, to encourage the students to think about relevant social care issues and to make them aware of the roles of social care professionals.

The students were then given time to prepare questions for Oliver and his family to explore specific issues in more depth. They had 15 minutes for this Hot-seating, with the aim of identifying needs and concerns which they could explore more fully with the relevant professionals later in the day. The social care professionals involved considered that: *The play was a good tool and generated questions from the audience ... it was a very visual way to stimulate the discussion groups.*

A large majority of the students enjoyed the performance and found it useful. Teachers attending the event all felt that the workshop either met or exceeded their expectations: *I think it was an eye opener to most of them...it made it realistic...such a good idea.* They felt that watching a performance as a starting point enabled them and their students to relate better to the characters and their situation: to think about the family's needs and the roles of the professionals. *The performance was great ... made the whole thing come to life. The characters seemed a natural family in the hotseating ... the drama was an excellent opportunity to explore the family and their needs.*