

# Welcome to the family

The merger between Community and BUSWE has brought new members to the union. Here we find out about one of our new members, her job and what she thinks about Community

NSPCC  
NATIONAL SOCIETY FOR THE PREVENTION OF CHILD ABUSE  
TREETOPS  
PROJECT

**'A lot of people think that because BUSWE is the British Union of Social Work Employees we are all social workers but there are people with a real variety of different jobs within the union and many like me are support staff,' says Julie Green.**

Julie works for the NSPCC's Treetops project in Hemel Hempstead. She has been with the NSPCC for five years – for the last 10 months, as office manager. 'Treetops was started over 20 years ago,' she explains. 'We work with children and young people who have been abused, offering them therapy so they can overcome traumatic experiences, as well as taking action to protect them in the future. Sometimes the children come here but mostly our social workers go out to assess them in the community and see what support they need.'

'My role is the overall management of the office,' she explains, 'that means overseeing the budget and the general day-to-day running. An administrator and I provide the back-up support that enables our six social workers and child services manager to do their jobs. That can involve anything from arranging travel to monitoring absence, sickness leave and time keeping, to ensuring our social workers keep up with their case notes. I collate the information on the casework they carry out and charge out their work. I also reproduce a financial breakdown report for the local authority. We're a small team so we work closely together.'

Before working at the NSPCC, Julie was a doctor's secretary and enjoyed being able to do something she felt was helping people. So when the NSPCC job came up she was keen to get into this area of work. 'While I'm not dealing with the issues face to face, I get a real insight into the difficulties many children face today through the work we do. It's rewarding to know you're playing a part in helping children who've been through terrible experiences to move on,' she says. 'I enjoy what I do, it's a really busy job, and challenges me, and it's good to work for an organisation that is doing something worthwhile.'

Julie had been a member of BUSWE for four years and joined because she was having some issues over working hours. 'Like a lot of people, I didn't consider joining the union until I had a problem but it was there to help me resolve the issue – as Community is now.'

Julie says she had heard about Community before the merger. 'I was aware that it was a supporter of the NSPCC and had heard about its pensions campaign. So when the merger came up I was in favour of it. I like the fact that Community is concerned about people not just at work but also in their communities. By joining with Community, I think members like me now have access to more services and resources like the Member Service Centre as well as more full-time officers to help with any concerns. Not to mention more training opportunities through Communitas. And for Community, I think BUSWE adds to its growing diversity, bringing more women into the union and an increasingly wide range of jobs with different challenges for the union to tackle – the social care sector is constantly going through change. We've also upped the numbers which will give Community more clout when it is campaigning and through Community we'll have a louder voice on social care but still have our own identity.'

Being part of a union is now so important to Julie that she is considering becoming a rep. 'I really appreciated the support the union has given me in the past and continues to give me now through Community,' she explains. 'The support, advice and information were a big part of it but also just knowing there's someone there who cares what happens to you and will fight your corner if needs be. Lots of people who work in the voluntary sector aren't union members and I'd like to raise awareness of what the union can do so people can see that they don't have to wait until something bad happens at work to join but can enjoy all the positive benefits of membership too.'

## NSPCC open days

Community has recently concluded the NSPCC pay claim with an increased offer. To promote this, Community is launching a series of open days at NSPCC offices across the country.

Starting at the London HQ on Thursday 26 and Friday 27 June, Community organisers Dean Apps (07834 745 816) and Lesley-Anne Ure (07710 709 938) will be visiting workplaces to answer questions and provide information.

Members can visit [www.community-tu.org/social](http://www.community-tu.org/social) to find out when their open day will be held.