

Care has to be established. This is the task today.

Care, today, has to be established. To address critics it is accepted that it is a polemical point, it is political point. These can be accepted along with it being accepted that this is a practical point. It is not possible to say we have a fully functioning care system. We have an archipelago of care, island exist and are strong, but surrounded by water, connected underwater to other islands, and always subject to flooding and being washed away.

Care has to be established as a living presence in the life of a child, each family, and the outside world with all of its services. There is an interdependency, 'care... cannot be properly be carried out unless caregivers and care receivers ... are supported.'

¹'Care is our individual and common ability to provide the political, social, material and emotional conditions that allow the vast majority of people ... to thrive'. ²

Rather than the 'contraction of public space'³ 'what would happen if were to begin instead to place care at the very centre of life?'⁴

Care means 'a social capacity and activity involving the nurturing of all that is necessary for the welfare and nourishing of life' ⁵. Experienced within an environment that is itself resilient, care is not an intervention, it stretches from family life to high level multi-professional environments. 'This can only happen if care, as a capacity and a practice, is cultivated, shared and resourced on an egalitarian basis' ⁶

The place of the family in social policy needs to be considered in the current political context. It is forwarded as the 'assumed basic unit of care' ⁷ If this is so it is a shaky basis taking into consideration all of the making and breaking of a relationships that are common in the modern world.⁸ The deployment of the family as a positive benefit in the world of a child is to portray it as an environment where all goes well. 'What if you don't have a family that can support you – what if your family has rejected you, or you have rejected them?'⁹

The neoliberal insistence on the taking care of yourself and those closest, an element of the wider 'exercising personal responsibility' often stated by neoliberal tacticians, leads to an exclusive definition of one's own and a diminution of a social world to that of the family. This family in reality may have broken, ambivalent, avoidant relationships, and have boundaries that are porous or intermittent. It is at that moment in previous social imaginations that the state stepped forwards with support, close to unconditional.

¹ Care Manifesto p 6

² Care Manifesto p 6

³ Care Manifesto p 16

⁴ Care Manifesto p 5

⁵ Care Manifesto p 5

⁶ Care Manifesto p 6

⁷ Care Manifesto p17

⁸ See NCERCC document: Is family care better than group living?

⁹ Care Manifesto p 17

In neoliberal imaginations support comes with conditions, time limited, costed, grant fuelled. The objectivist philosophy of neoliberalism connects to something deeper, and historical, in the national psyche. By being in the situation to require support is to experience directly of being ascribed as 'undeserving'.

If we take universal care as an organising principle, as 'the ideal of a society in which care is placed front and centre on every scale of life,'¹⁰ avowing our 'mutual interdependencies ... at the heart of care and caregiving'¹¹ we are propelled to reimagine the limits of family life, explore alternatives to markets and marketisation, 'restoring, reinvigorating and radically deepening (the idea of) welfare states; and ... mobilising, and cultivating radical cosmopolitan conviviality.'¹²

How could we go about this?

¹⁰ Care Manifesto p19

¹¹ Care Manifesto p19

¹² Care Manifesto p20