



Interviewee: Cherry Rowlings Dates: 17 <sup>th</sup> May Role(s): Professor of Social Work	
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## Interview summary:

<i>Summary of content; with time (min:secs)</i>
<b>Start – 0.12</b>
<b>0.12</b> - Describes how she came to Stirling (in 1991); job offered in Social Work Department by Juliette Cheetham whilst working at Bristol University. Describes physical differences between Bristol and Stirling, Stirling being a campus uni, and small number of students, which improved relationships with staff and students.
<b>2.08</b> - Discusses role at Stirling; head of Social Working course, responsible for developing the course and gaining support from sponsors and governing bodies (due to changes in government policy). Claims lack of staff before her arrival meant department was behind, causing initial struggles for Rowlings. Overall describes role as 'hands on'.
<b>5.02</b> - Describes small faculty in department (estimates 4 or 5 staff members), due to course being post-graduates only. Claims part-time staff involved were officially part of the Education Department but worked in Social Work; claims division between part time and full-time staff (depending on level of teaching they provided).
<b>8.25</b> - Discusses broad issues for Social Work in 1991, including having UK social work qualifications recognised in the European Union so graduates could legally practise in Europe. Governments had debated how much academic training a social worker needed, which Rowlings describes as time-consuming but interesting. Also highlights issue of accessibility of social work across minority groups; within Stirling, emphasis was on getting students of minority ethnic background (women in particular).
<b>14.19</b> - Describes lack of relationship between Social Work course and Evening Degree Programme, for part-time undergraduate students. Students could transfer between the two, but they studied separately with different tutors.
<b>16.09</b> - Discussion of access for post-graduate students from non-traditional background; claims most had gained undergraduate degrees in social work, a route supported by previous heads of department. Suggests there was a financial reason (students had to pay more, funding would be lost without post-graduate programme).

<b>19.39</b> - Discussion of regulatory bodies in Stirling's social work course; anti-discriminatory practice itself seen as oppressive, also as a preoccupation for staff in uni and on regulatory bodies who focused on qualifications for working in government. Suggests Stirling was better for accessibility and anti-discriminatory issues than older universities across the UK (less prestige to maintain). Principles John Forty and Andrew Miller supportive of anti-discrimination programmes. Claims social work department significant in these programmes.
<b>26.07</b> - Discussion of tension between typical university courses and 'profession courses' like social work; Rowlings highlights lack of depth (e.g., academic, ethical) in social work studies that causes tension. Quality of dissertations from typical and professional courses always compared.
<b>28.59</b> - Comparison of post-graduate students and undergraduate students in Social Work department; post-graduates were older with more academic experience, but undergraduates used to be mature students, so had almost equal life/work experience. Rowlings suggests similarity in 1991 classes that don't exist today (more undergraduates aged 17/18). Teaching is now separated.
<b>33.11</b> - Discussion of professional development and master's degree categorisation (MSc) beginning in 1996/7. New master's programme made course seem more credible, also thanks to collaboration with University of Edinburgh. Claims Social Work Research Centre key to developing MSc, which incorporated criminal justice. Collaboration with Edinburgh benefitted both universities but closed due to niche nature of the course.
<b>37.40</b> - Discussion of 'advanced awards', which linked undergraduate and postgraduate courses to employers. Claims Stirling succeeded in creating the courses and connecting with employers (recognises this success due to place on a regulatory board for social work programmes). Suggests interviewer (Kate Skinner) was significant in establishing advanced award.
<b>40.39</b> - Describes relationships within department between different courses (sociology, social policy, housing, later criminology). Suggests social work was separated, not due to hostility, but explains offices were mixed so lecturers in different subjects interacted. Claims heads of department were interested and sympathetic. Talks about the size of the department being an issue in larger university system, budget issues that changed weekly and politics of how social work is taught.
<b>47.04</b> - Describes contact with Scottish Government and how it differed from England (smaller system, more networking possibilities). Social Work Research Centre brought funding and government attention; for example, funding given to provide social work training in Scottish Islands. Suggests department projects were reliant on government involvement.
<b>52.21</b> - Discussion of balance between teaching and research; funding changed based on quantity and quality of research projects. Claims all applied departments struggle with this balance. Regrets not researching more. Claims separation of Social Work Research Centre and social policy course made research harder.
<b>57.00</b> - Describes highlights of working at Stirling, including reenergizing social work course and establishing advanced awards and giving employers hope in the course. Also, arrival of nursing and midwifery courses that meant Rowlings successfully took role of supervising the new course. Colleagues claims her role was significant and successful in comparison to other universities who took on nursing and midwifery courses.
<b>1.05.53</b> - Further discussion of nursing and midwifery course at Stirling and wider Scotland, specifically changes to degree requirements for qualifications and seen as more academic. Rowlings suggests university training was positive and teaching was necessary (as well as placements). Highlights similarity between nursing and social work and debates about whether degrees are needed.
<b>1.09.34</b> - Describes highlights of Stirling again, including campus scenery and positive work relationships in and outside of social work department.
<b>1.11.34</b> - Describes frustrations, including not receiving grants and trying to balance teaching and research successfully.
<b>1.12.48</b> - Discussion of how the university relates to Stirling community; claims campus is open to all but overlooked by local council initially (e.g., not signposted on roads). Claims employment opportunities saved university from closure. Local businesses and families also supportive, for example Graham's Dairy. Describes evening degree programmes as good link to community (highlights numbers falling over time).
<b>1.19.09</b> - Describes pride in social work department at Stirling and continuity of reputation being improved since Rowlings' time.
<b>End - 1.21.44</b>

<b>Interview No:</b>	SURSA OH/ 113	<p><b>SURSA</b>  <b>University of Stirling</b>  <b>Stirling</b>  <b>FK9 4LA</b></p> <p><a href="mailto:info@sursa.org.uk">info@sursa.org.uk</a>  <a href="http://www.sursa.org.uk">www.sursa.org.uk</a></p>	<p><b>SURSA</b></p>  <p>Oral History</p>
<b>Interviewed by:</b>	Kate Skinner		
<b>Date of interview:</b>	17 <sup>th</sup> May		
<b>Summary completed by:</b>	Violet Cooke		
<b>Date:</b>	26 <sup>th</sup> March 2025		