



**SOCIAL WORK**  
**SUMMER READING RECOMMENDATIONS FROM TEACHING STAFF 2026**

Staff member nominating the book	Book Title and Author	Comments
Prof John Devaney	Book: Wilkinson, R. and Pickett, K.(2010) <i>The Spirit Level: Why Equality is Better for Everyone</i> . Penguin Books.	This book is a helpful reminder that many of the challenges that individuals face in life, and that social workers become involved with, are to do with the ways in which society is structured. Almost everything - from life expectancy to mental illness, violence, to illiteracy - is affected not by how wealthy a society is, but how equal it is, and how resources are accessed.
Dr Steve Kirkwood	Book: <i>Poverty Safari: Understanding the Anger of Britain's Underclass</i> by Darren McGarvey	This book provides an insightful account of the impact of poverty and inequality in Scotland and the wider UK.
Dr Steve Kirkwood	Book: <i>Pervasive Punishment: Making Sense of Mass Supervision</i> by Fergus McNeill	An analysis of the nature and scale of the supervision of people who have been involved in criminal offending, further illustrated through a creative short story.
Dr Robin Sen	Book: <i>My Name is Why</i> by Lemn Sissay	This is a heart-rending story of Lemn Sissay's time as a Black child in the UK care system detailing how he found a way through it to become a renowned writer and performer. Though not directly about social work practice, there are clear messages for social worker practitioners here too - from the examples of those who failed Lemn in



		their practice, to those who provided highly valuable support through the most difficult experiences he had.
Dr Eve Mullins	Film: <i>I, Daniel Blake</i> (2016) directed by Ken Loach	Powerful film showing how rigid welfare systems can fail vulnerable people. It highlights the importance of empathy, advocacy, and non-judgemental values as well as the need to be person-centred in social work.  Many films directed by Ken Loach explore contemporary and historical social issues which are relevant for understanding social work practice.
Dr Jackie Gulland	Book: Kenway, Emily. (2023) <i>Who cares: the hidden crisis of caregiving, and how we solve it</i> . London: Wildfire.	Very readable account of the world of unpaid carers, shortlisted for the Orwell Prize. I asked the author, at her book launch, what message she would have for student social workers regarding unpaid carers, she said. 'Ask carers how they are doing. Then ask them again.' A good background reading for students to help them think about caring.
Karen Armstrong	Book: <i>Euphoric Recall</i> by Aiden Martin, who grew up in West Lothian	This is a gripping memoir that follows Aiden's recovery from addiction and trauma. This book offers honest insight into addiction, sexual abuse and mental ill health. Significantly, this book provides hope for recovery.  Aiden discusses trauma and trauma informed practice on this podcast <a href="https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=TQpciUOCc-Y&amp;pp=0gcJCU8Co7VqN5tD">https://m.youtube.com/watch?v=TQpciUOCc-Y&amp;pp=0gcJCU8Co7VqN5tD</a>
Dr Georgia Cole	Radio: 'File on 4 Investigates' archives on BBC R4 <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006th08/episodes/player">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006th08/episodes/player</a>	Short, interesting insights into various social work topics, e.g., Can Cash Grants help end homelessness? <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002nv5y">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002nv5y</a> <a href="#">Adoption: The Blame Game</a>



		<p>Youth Justice: The project keeping young offenders out of custody - <a href="http://bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002k3jm">bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002k3jm</a> Sex Offenders: The Long Way Back - <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002htvp">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002htvp</a> Domestic Abuse: Beyond the Check list - <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002hqb7">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002hqb7</a> Chemical Control: Drugged and Raped by My Husband - <a href="https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002c35p">https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m002c35p</a></p>
--	--	--