

Adolescent -Aftercare Service 2

Speaker key

CA Caption
IE Interviewee Victoria Clotley

CA Describe your specialist area and your day to day role.

VC My name is Victoria Clotley; I'm a social worker in the Adolescent Aftercare Service. I've been working with Southwark for the past six years now - six years yesterday - and initially when I first came here I was working with the service as a personal advisor, and that was working with the 18 to 21 year olds. I finished my social work training last year; I did a degree in social work sponsored by Southwark, and I began working as a social worker this January.

CA What training and development have you received since arriving at Southwark, and how has this impacted upon your job?

VC Three years previously I started a degree at South Bank University on a day release scheme through Southwark, which was to complete a degree in social work. So I've been doing that one day a week and also I've been doing various other courses as part of my role as a personal advisor; training on drug awareness, alcohol, and HIV/AIDS awareness training; training on housing benefit and other training relevant to my role.

CA What are the career progression opportunities like at Southwark, and has this had a positive impact on your career?

VC As I said, I've been with Southwark for the past six years and during that time I've completed a degree in social work sponsored by Southwark, and that allowed me to progress from my initial role here as personal advisor - so I'm now a qualified social worker. I'm hoping I can start my post qualifying training in January, and I'm sure that will assist me with my professional development as a social worker and help my career progression within Southwark. There are various roles available to me after I've finished that, and I'd like to work in different departments to gather more experience; there is a transfer protocol in place which will allow me to transfer to different departments to gain that experience. After that one can apply for posts such as senior practitioner, or a practice manager's post.

CA What level of understanding do you feel Southwark has of the demands social workers are placed under?

VC I feel that the management team I have here are very supportive; they have an open door policy so you can approach them all the time if you've got an issue or problem, so you can more or less discuss it straight away with them. You also have formal supervision twice a month so you are able to talk through all your cases; and also any personal issues that may be impacting on work at any period of time. I've just started the Home Working Scheme, where

I'm able to access information at home and type up reports and so forth, and they also have flexible working - so you're able to negotiate your hours with your manager.

CA What do you think the perception is of Southwark [as a place and employer] in the market place?

VC I've been working for the borough for the past six years so I know that they are a good employer, but I could see that people may think that - because of where it's based, that it's inner city - and there might be a lot of problems and very busy, but all social work is very busy. But you do get a lot of support from the management team, and there are things like flexible working and home working available to assist you; they do put an emphasis on home/work life balance, and you do have supervision where you can discuss any personal issues you might have that might impact on your work - if they are aware of that they can accommodate you. So I think if people are considering this borough, I've always said that it's a good employer both to my colleagues here and to other people outside.