

# Adoption Service

## Speaker key

SM Sarah Milan

[caption] Describe your specialist area and your day-to-day role.

SM My name's Sarah Milan. I'm a social worker in the Adoption Team. My day-to-day role is with recruitment and assessment of prospective adopters, and also family-finding for looked after children who require adoptive families.

[caption] What training and development have you received since arriving at Southwark and how has this impacted upon your job?

SM I've benefited from quite a lot of training in the five years that I've been at Southwark, from the introductory levels when I first started through to more complex and specialist training as my career's progressed. I've also been able to undertake the post-qualifying social work awards, the childcare award specifically, last year, which is really, really helped me develop within my job and my team.

[caption] What are the career progression opportunities like at Southwark and has this had a positive impact on your career?

SM Well, I think doing the childcare award was one main thing which has helped me progress. I also think in Southwark there are opportunities to become a senior practitioner, which is a good progression from just having a general social work role. I've also been able to progress between teams as well and took advantage of the transfer scheme about four years ago.

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

SM I think there's a definite acknowledgement by management that our job can be stressful; there are times when it's really quite demanding, and there's quite a few different ways which I feel supported. Personally, in the Adoption Team, there's a lot of peer supervision that goes on, there's a lot of support from my colleagues. I also have the formal supervision process which takes places every three or four weeks. There's also general support from the team manager, who has a real involved approach to her staff, which I think really helps overall.

[caption] What is your view on the level of support provided at Southwark? Give an example of when Southwark was there when you needed it the most.

SM I think, personally, when I moved to the Adoption Team, it was to a very specialist area of work, whereas before I'd been doing a more general social work role, so I was offered a lot of support in developing that specialist knowledge. And,

professionally, there are some cases which are more stressful than others, and I've certainly been able to ask for additional time, additional supervision, when I've needed it.

[caption] Can you describe the resources available to you and your team, and how important this is to you in successfully carrying out your role?

SM I think the resources that the Adoption Team draws on are really good. We have excellent communication with medical professionals and education specialists, and I've found them particularly useful to get advice and support in making the right decisions for children. But, also, to help assist us getting extra services for children, having those specialists on hand to explain processes and support you with that has been really excellent.

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

SM I've only ever worked for Southwark, but I have met a lot of social workers from other boroughs when I did the childcare award, and I found myself explaining the benefits that I had at my job and then being quite amazed at what they didn't have in comparison. In terms of the childcare award, we had funding to buy literature, so books for the course. And other benefits which come to you as a member of staff, I think don't exist in a lot of other boroughs.