

Assessment, Family Support - Safeguarding

Speaker key

CA Caption

RM Roger Mang

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

RM My name's Roger Mang; I am a family advisor in the assessment care team in Southwark children's services; in this team, essentially we try to prevent children from going into care; if there are no child protection issues we try to work with the family and the young person to try and keep them together, or at least keep them within their family or extended family. Our team works with children from 16 year olds and we tend to work on a 12 week cycle; we try to work intensively with the parents and young children which means we can work anywhere from once, twice a week to see them, and work directly with mum and the child to try to change patterns of behaviour and see if we can keep them together. It can be anything from going to a family's house meeting with the parents, meeting with the young person outside the family home and engaging with them. Then we have something called the Triple P [?] programme which we do with the parents, where we teach them how to engage with young people, parent them, boundaries and that kind of thing as well. Today I spent most of my day with a young person trying to convince him to go home, and we had his mum and sister come in to try and help us convince him of that, as well - it was quite a long day, actually! Apart from that I'll often type up the notes from that and we do some training, as well - which is also part of the role.

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

RM Southwark gives you a hell of a lot of training opportunities - they're actually renowned for it; the most recent training we did was the Triple P training which is the basis of what we do with ACT, we deal with the parents, we teach them practical skills in a programme to help them deal with a young person, so it directly affects what we do on a day to day basis.

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

RM My opportunities are kind of limited right now because I'm a psychologist in social services, but I do have managers asking me whether I do want to further my career in social services as a social worker - so there's always an opportunity there for me.

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

RM That kind of depends; within my own team obviously people understand you to a T. My managers understand my work very well because I speak to them pretty much every day

about that; even the service managers we have do understand what we do, so I believe they have an excellent understanding.

CA 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.

RM That's a really good question to ask today, as it's been extremely tough; I've had a young person threatening to kill himself. I couldn't find my line manager as she was at a meeting - I was able to call her later - but I did find another manager to talk to who guided me through the process and was really supportive through out all of it. I would say that is not uncommon in Southwark, in fact it's generally the norm.

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

RM I would go back to the Triple P training; we get an enormous amount of funding for the resources, there are a lot of booklets, programmes, and we subscribe to a website for that, as well, so we're always up to date with the Triple P training and how we deliver Triple P. There are always resources available in terms of social work literature in Mabel Golden House, so in terms of keeping up to date with best practices we have so many resources there that are available to us - and the fact that we have the Triple P resources available affects us on a daily basis, because we need to provide these things to the parents.

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

RM Social workers coming to Southwark they are treated very well in terms of remuneration and benefits. Also the support that you get in Southwark is quite renowned compared to other boroughs - you are well supported here. As a borough it's up and coming, it has three stars at this point and we're working towards four stars, so I like to think it does have a good name in the community.