

Tony Nakhimoff: Hello and welcome to Barnet Children's Service podcast, it's been produced to mark the launch of our new integrated recruitment website. You'll hear first-hand about what is like to work with the Borough's children and young people and by bringing together managers and frontline professionals from across the Children's Service you'll get an insider's view of our vision that together anything's possible in Barnet.

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My name is Tony Nakhimoff, Organisational Development Manager for Barnet's Children's Service. The launch of this campaign is about two things; it's about firstly, the fact that we are an integrated Children's Service and we want to offer recruitment opportunities across the children's workforce, whether it's social workers, youth workers; and the second issue is around the fact that we want to position ourselves as an innovative forward thinking employer, and our slogan, together anything's possible in Barnet attempts very much to reflect this.

My name's Mark Vagerson, I'm participation Co-ordinator within the Youth and Connexions Service. I started as a detached youth worker in Barnet that's street based youth work, so that's working with young people mainly in the evening time in estates across Barnet. I think I was surprised by the level of deprivation and need within certain parts of the Borough, but felt excited about the challenge of meeting that need as a youth worker. I think where you're keen and enthusiastic and have got ideas Barnet is a place that's willing to invest in those ideas. So certainly coming out of University as a new Youth Worker I was buzzing with ideas and actually having the resources behind me and staffing behind me to work together and say, yeah give this a try let's make this happen, has been really exciting.

My name's Alice Smith and I'm one of the social workers within one of the child in care teams. I started in Barnet in 2004 because I got accepted on the Graduate Training Scheme. I was wanting to go to University but I needed the experience to be able to get on the course so I found this scheme, thought this is brilliant and it made the route through my qualification so much easier. Now being qualified I do think I owe a lot of it to the scheme. There was always the feeling Barnet's quite proud, I think, of its Graduate Trainee Scheme and I really think it's the best way to go into social work. I couldn't imagine the route of just going to University and then going out having to look for a job. You know you need a lot more than that and that's what you get through this Scheme. I probably didn't imagine actually that you have as much ability to be creative and do different things whilst you're in the work. I think when I decided I wanted to go into social work there was a view that social work was very limited and you can get out there and do anything. I think I had painted a negative view of the profession before I came into

it so I was actually pleasantly surprised that you can actually do quite a lot with the children or young people; whatever age range you work with.

My name's Tara Malaney and I'm a connexions personal adviser with the youth and connexions team. I work with young people primarily aged 13 to 19 and my job is to be a jack of all trades to know something about everything that may affect a young person's life. So that could be something about sexual health, or bullying at school, it could be about housing or it could be about "I'm feeling a bit down at the moment" or it could be "I wanna take a gap year have you got any ideas". It's a completely varied job. On the same day I could meet a young person who's come from an affluent background that's very high achieving and meet someone who needs a bit more help.

I'm Karen Landsmen, I'm a foster carer for Barnet, I've been with Barnet for about five and a half years now. I'm quite an active member of a web forum for foster carers across the country and from the things that people have said I've realised that Barnet offers good support for the carers, social events and things like that, that they're really trying to make a nice team and also quite importantly Barnet's pay package, so to speak, is very realistic which is very important if you're thinking of becoming a foster carer. You need to know if you can actually afford to do it and Barnet are realistic and do make it that you don't end up putting your hand in your pocket the whole time to support the child.

I've lived in Barnet all my life, other people that I know that have, you know, come to visit from other places that they live all say "Oh it's quite nice here, oh we didn't realise". In the holidays we can easily jump on the tube and take the kids up to the museums and all the London things but you're also not far from jumping in the car and going round the M25 or the M1 or whatever, and get to wherever else you want.

Tony Nakhimoff: I think what differentiates Barnet from other authorities is certainly the view we've had of recruitment for a number of years now in the Children's Service; which is towards a very strong focus on getting the very best people we can and putting a great deal of effort into doing that.

My name's Tony Lupoli and I'm a team manager at Barnet's children's service. In my career at Barnet I've experienced a lot of success in terms of the development of social workers. I've seen a lot of very anxious newly qualified social workers join the Borough and actually with a lot of support and a lot of direction and actually really build a lot of confidence and in turn be able to make a big difference in the families they work with. I think experienced social worker should consider Barnet for various reasons; if they're looking to be part of a very organised Local Authority this would be the place for them to come. Certainly in terms of very clear procedures and protocols Barnet's definitely leads the way.

My name is Alison Lamb and I'm a Team Manager in referral and assessment. I think the job is difficult wherever you go I think it's very hard job to do and people are not going to be going to Local Authorities where they feel they're not going to get a level of support. I think the important thing to do when looking at recruitment is to be open and honest and transparent to people who want to work with us. Barnet historically has kept all its managers, they don't seem to come and go you have quite a good solid group of managers. I think one of the most important things about job is that you have to be able

to be supported appropriately by management structure and I think Barnet is very good at offering that level to newly qualified and experienced social workers.

Tony Nakhimoff: The experienced social workers we have tell me that what they like about Barnet is the professional development they still get, the opportunities for their own managerial development. We pride ourselves on smaller caseloads. It's all those things that make the working environment much better.

Mark: One of the most exciting things for me is the opportunity to manage a team of staff and that wasn't necessarily something I anticipated when I first started with Barnet but certainly something I was encouraged to have a look at by my line manager at the time and so for the last three years now I've got a staffed team that I've been involved in and that's not necessarily to say that things have gone well from day one. But a real commitment to me in terms of gaining skills in terms of management, supervision of staff, appraisals of staff and that's really exciting but as I said not something I imagined when I first joined Barnet.

Tara: One of the things which is kind of new to me now that I work for Barnet Council is that I'm a key worker and I'm now eligible for key workers housing; which means I can get some money together for a deposit on a flat locally so you're living locally to where you work or you can apply for some of the new housing that they're building and put in for it and bid for it almost as a member of staff. So that's one thing that's massive and kind of really need I guess for people working for the council.

The youngest I work with is three the oldest is sixteen so I get a good age range really. You have days where you've gone from meeting to meeting to meeting and you get to your last one and you just think I haven't got the energy to do it yet again but you'll go in and it might be actually a meeting with one of your young people and you're just hanging out with them; getting to talk to them is what it's all about really and that's what get you through all the long boring and other laborious tasks you have to do as well. I love the fact that I do meet so many different young people from so many different backgrounds and that I've never ever had a day in Barnet where I've had the same issue over and over and over again it's just so diverse it just kinda feels like I do know something about most things that will affect a young person because I've already had that conversation or I've had that interview with that young person and that's what I love about my job.

Karen: If you're actually fostering it really, I think it, comes from your heart. It has to it come from your heart more than from your bank balance but at the same point if you want to be able to foster you have to be able to feed those children, you have to keep them warm. This is just what I do and I love what I do and this is the right thing for me to be doing. Often I've met people who say I've always wanted to do that, you think well why not go for it then why not find out more. There's no point saying oh I've always wanted to climb Mount Everest if you don't know anything about climbing Mount Everest.

Tony Nakhimoff: my message to anyone considering applying to Barnet would be get on the website, go and have a look, see if we live up to what I'm saying and if it looks like we do apply because we want the very, very best people to come and join us in Barnet.

Thanks for your interest in Barnet's Children's Service to find out more please visit our [www.barnet.gov.uk/barnetpossibilities](http://www.barnet.gov.uk/barnetpossibilities)