

# Case Study

## Long-term permanent recruitment



I came to work as a social worker for a unitary authority in the South West region of England just after Christmas 2005. My one year old child and my wife resettled together with me from a flat in hip central Berlin to a tiny three bed room house in rural England. Our decision followed our wish for a sound change. I was made redundant, my wife didn't want to go back to her old job, we didn't want our child to grow up in a big city and we knew that it was time to make our long held wish come true, to live in England. We knew England and Wales from pervious holidays and friendships we had made. We felt comfortable with the people, the culture and the language.

More importantly than just knowing England and Wales from holidays and through friends was actually to prepare for working and living in the United Kingdom. All the officers, from recruiter to manager of Jacaranda were ever so supportive to give me a lot of information on social work practice, laws, guidance and policies as well as practical information to help my family and I settle in successfully.

Having been prepared so well to find a home and on the theory of the social work practice in England I could completely focus on getting my hands on the job. However, I have to mention that I already had some years of social work practice gained in Germany. The problems that social workers deal with in England are similar to those in Germany. These can range, for example, from working with children in families where domestic violence is a feature, drug and alcohol related issues or more serious cases of neglect which may yield to dealing with child protection issues or even applying for a care order at court. I was very impressed by the rigid and sound processes that are in place. The models and theories that I had learned were transferable and my practice continuously improved through learning new ways of working with children and families. My employer supported this through offering me manifold learning and training opportunities.

There is a whole range of fields of working with children and families. Along with this come opportunities. I was promoted to a Senior Practitioner post in a newly established Looked After Children Team within a year and a half. I was asked to

manage the leaving care section of the team. This gave me great opportunities to impact on service delivery to clients. I was able to make the most of multi-agency and multi-disciplinary working to bring the agenda for care leavers forward. My employer gave me opportunities to go new ways and participate at national forums and conferences which in return strengthened my working practice and improved the outcomes for care leavers. Two years later I took on a secondment to Children's Strategic Services where I am currently involved in building up a new team to improve commissioning of social care services. My employer is committed to workforce development and to support all social work staff to improve their practice through post qualification courses. I am currently enrolled as part time student and aim at a degree in leadership and management at a university.

My perception is that it is well worth to stretch oneself for a career in the UK. It's not all easy and people have to keep up with the demands of the job. It is the nature of the work that it is fast-paced and does change, often due to the clients' changing needs. However, it gives great opportunity to bring in experience and to apply knowledge and skills.

Nearly five years on, my wife and I now have two children and feel well settled. British society is multicultural and tolerant and makes it easy for immigrants to feel at home.

Stephan, *Social Worker*

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