



BEDFORD
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Social Work
in Bedford Borough



Q&A Session



Becky Haasch

Manager for Children's Social Care

How long have you worked at Bedford?

Since March 2017 and in my current role since December 2018.

What do you enjoy the most about your day to day job?

Definitely the time I get to speak with staff. I like talking about the families they're working with, what they're doing and the creative ways in which they're engaging with children. I also love hearing about their successes.

What makes your team tick / what drives your team?

I've worked hard to create a service where everyone feels safe to learn together. We can't always get it right, but we've created a culture where people feel safe to say 'I don't know' or 'I got it wrong'. I encourage creativity and open ways to find solutions. Ultimately, everyone is passionate about working with kids and families.

What do you enjoy most about working for Bedford?

I value and enjoy the quality of the relationships. My service is all based on one floor and this encourages conversation and new ideas. I feel enabled to be creative and make changes that work better for families and social workers. We have the possibility to try things out and if it works, roll out new practices across the service quickly.

What made you come into social care and what made you choose to work at Bedford?

I originally trained in Psychology in the US with the view to being a Child Psychologist. As part of my training I volunteered at a homeless shelter and my interactions with one little girl made me want to work with vulnerable children and families, so I completed a master's degree in Social Work. I moved to UK in 2006, and had always worked for large authorities, so I wanted to experience working for a smaller authority. I love working in a small authority. It allows me to be close to practice - which is what I love and am passionate about. It also allows me and my staff to speak up if things can be done better, letting us make those changes which in turn have a positive knock-on effect for families.



What are your key achievements in this role to date?

Developing and maintaining a permanent management group, developing a culture where it feels safe to have difficult conversations, and numerous creative developments such as a template for child in need reviews with the child at the centre. CAF/CASS and the judiciary have also given really good feedback on our practice here at Bedford Borough Council.

Do you feel supported to achieve your goals?

Yes, definitely.

Tell us about a time when you have been proud of a team member

Many times, it's hard to pinpoint one. Most recently, a Social Worker was working with a challenging situation with a family (father and child). There were lots of difficult conversations with the father and his wider family. The social worker worked really hard to ensure a smooth transition for that family to a new area and to form new relationships in that authority. The father wrote a thank you letter and sent chocolates for all the help he'd received from the social worker - those are the little moments that make it worth it.

How do you feel about your current case-load, and how does this compare with previous roles?

Caseloads are manageable - we've worked really hard to bring the number down and get more resource so Social Workers have the time and space to work with families.

What is your main objective for 2021?

Just to keep doing what we're doing. Continue to learn and improve. I'm mindful of covid and so keep focussing on taking care of ourselves and each other.

What would your advice be for anyone looking to get into/start a new role within social care?

Bedford Borough Council has an excellent Academy - it's a tough job, no doubt about it, but it's incredibly rewarding and if you find the right place with the right people I think you'd love it.

Monika on Becky:



She's a very inspirational person, always very supportive. Best Head of Service I've ever worked with, very supportive, always there to bounce my ideas with no matter how crazy or creative. She has a really strong and powerful vision of what she wants - it's contagious. Very positive person - if something doesn't go well, and not everything does, then she is very supportive. I've learnt so much from her and want to continue this journey with her. She has a great sense of humour! In my time as a social worker I've never experienced a manager like her before, she's brought people together - a real diverse mix of people and all have different views, and opinions but we all work well together and are able to have honest relationships and have open, honest and challenging conversations. It's really refreshing.

