

Adele:

So I came through a Masters route at Plymouth university so I wasn't connected to Cornwall Council however my placements were in Cornwall Council so you already get a feel for the job. You get kind of frontline experience and hands-on learning and Cornwall Council have provided opportunities to learners which I thought were really positive so they were always open to fresh ideas, new learning and in terms of the team. So I think that's what attracted me to Cornwall. So you can go down the office and speak to a psychologist or speak to the disabilities team whereas I felt from my peers' experience in other local authorities they worked quite in an isolated way. So I came through the Masters route, it's challenging but it's so rewarding and then when you join Cornwall Council you can take part in the assessment supported year in employment which is a whole year where you're supported to develop your practice, develop your confidence and work in a safe way but a supported way in terms of social work. I think I've always been attracted to supporting vulnerable children and families and I think we're in such a privileged position to enter these individuals' lives to support them and make some positive change. So for me that's why I came in, to make positive change in children's lives

and also in terms of working effectively with children and being creative in our own practice and Cornwall allows us to do that. We're very autonomous in the way we work. We're very supported not just by our team managers but also colleagues and the wider Council so that is why I love social work and that's why I came into it. I think the most rewarding part of the job is building that relationship with children and families when they're in a really low place and when they're experiencing difficulties that they haven't created themselves and it is created by the wider community we live in whether that's financial difficulties whether it's difficulties with housing which we know are relevant across the country and I think it's seeing children happier, feel safer and also families as a unit being happier and healthier. Rewarding elements,

I think it is just generally seeing that positive change no matter how big or small that is whether it's getting a child to school five days a week, whether it's seeing a family move forward in a positive way, flee abusive relationships and just make the changes and I think in terms of the support they are so willing to get involved in that so for me that's the rewarding part, just seeing children and families a lot happier living in Cornwall. I think Cornwall in itself is a beautiful place so we've obviously got the coastline, we've got the moors and we always say to children we can either go to the malls or the shores today. We are very lucky. We can do a lot of direct work on beaches so we use the three tools, three houses tool, and we'll often go to the beach and draw the three houses out rather than going and sitting in a school and giving them a worksheet. So we

can be very creative in the way we engage children and families. Cornwall I would say is a very supported working environment for social workers especially if you're newly qualified. The practice education team are out of this world. They're always offering whether it's face-to-face support or support in supervision and also you get the opportunity to better yourself as a professional whether you're a newly qualified or an experienced social worker. I think for me as a relatively newly qualified social worker - so I've only been in the job two and a half years - I came into this job and I think you feel overwhelmed. There's a lot of responsibility and I think the teams you are based within, they're your grounding so we have a buddy system in Cornwall so you will automatically be assigned a buddy so they will be a slightly more experienced social worker and they will check in with you weekly. You'll have fortnightly supervision and also Cornwall will emphasise the importance of group supervisions so we will liaise with other teams, reflect on a case study and that's about getting other people's perspectives because we believe sometimes when you're so ingrained in a case it's good to have another fresh pair of eyes of where we go next I think. You're supported not just by your your team, you're supported by the head of service, the interim managers and also. So I sit within a family assessment and support team so in the east of Cornwall. There's three of those so they make it a priority for all teams in the same kind of division to meet up and have those conversations and that's really to increase our knowledge and develop further skills on how we can effectively engage with children and families because everything changes all the time and also to share knowledge, share new legislation, share opinions and different perspectives of working in social care.

Victoria:

So when my journey in social work in Cornwall started I actually was employed for a number of years as a youth worker in Cornwall. As the youth work service changed I ended up working in a social work team as a youth worker. I did that for a number of years and was actually encouraged by my manager at the time to look at the traineeship they just started. So basically the Council funded the degree path and within that traineeship you got the opportunity to work in lots of different teams prior to starting the degree so you kind of got an experience as a kind of family worker and working alongside social workers. And then obviously during the degree we had different placements so I was lucky enough to do an adult's placement and then I did my final placement in a child and care team and then once I qualified I was then placed in the team that I continue to work in now. So in terms of development in Cornwall, as I said I started off with the traineeship, I then completed my ASYE so that's your assess year in in practice through the Council. I am now just about to do my what they call a J grade panel so within terms of development there's a clear sort of career path so

you kind of work your way up the stages and so at the moment I'm just about to do the J grade panel, so I've got to complete a portfolio, go to panel, evidence my continual learning through since becoming qualified. So in terms of the support that you get in Cornwall there is a dedicated practice educators team so you can access support the whole way through your ASYE. In terms of my team, my manager is amazing so she is on the phone anytime in terms of colleagues. We've got quite a diverse team in terms of their experience so that that's been second to none in terms in terms of learning different styles of practice and different bits and pieces and in terms actually as a collective force of social workers in children's there is support everywhere, everywhere you look. I guess being a social worker in Cornwall in terms of my job I work in what we call the FAST team so the family assessment support team, so we are the front door team. So we never know what's coming in on it so our work every day is different and I think we're in such a privileged position to work with families, children, young people in Cornwall and to offer that support at that moment in time that they need. It's an interesting place to work and there's lots of things outside of work which are great. We live in a beautiful beautiful county and and you know if you've got to work you may as well work somewhere where you know you can nip to the beach afterwards. But yeah there's lots of positives to working in Cornwall.