



Alumnus Subject Graduated Clem Deniran
MSc Social Work
1994
Place of Work Position Barnardo's
Assistant Director Children's Services



Barnardo's transforms the lives of vulnerable children across the UK through the work of projects, campaigning and research expertise. Clem is Barnardo's Assistant Director Children's Services influencing good practice and delivery of services to children, young people and their families.

Great minds *go on to* great places

What was your career path before joining Royal Holloway?

I was an unqualified social worker employed in a local authority social services office before joining Royal Holloway. I had a degree in Sociology and had been studying for the ACCA professional accounting examinations, before making a decision to pursue a career in social work with the aim of progressing into social work management. I therefore undertook a postgraduate diploma in management studies in preparation for social work management and commenced the MSc. Social Work course following successful completion of my management course.

What is your fondest memory of Royal Holloway?

I had some very good lecturers who made the course a great deal of fun whilst having a serious edge to it. I also had a good year group. It is a great university. I wasn't involved in the social life as I commuted and always wanted to beat the rush hour congestion. The surrounding area was very quiet and conducive to studying and transportation was very good and easy. One very interesting thing I remember was the poor acting skills some of my classmates had when we had to engage in video recorded role play. They often behaved as if they were in Hollywood and had great acting skills, but the rest of us could see they were terrible.

What did you enjoy most about studying in the Department of Social Work?

I both liked my lecturers and enjoyed the breath of the course. There was a wide range of compulsory courses which prepared me for future social work practice and gave me a variety of options to pursue. I got a lot from the variety of workshops organised which helped me to relate what I was learning on the course to real life situations. This enhanced my learning.

What would you say is the biggest benefit of studying Social Work at postgraduate level?

Undertaking a postgraduate in social work gave me a career advantage and helped fast track my progress into social work management. The depth of analysis and technical details of the course would assist a social worker in day-to-day casework assessments and analysis. In addition, the depth of knowledge the course provided equipped me for tutoring and teaching of social work and in delivering training to social work organisations.

What is the most important thing that Royal Holloway has taught you?

Royal Holloway has taught me about assurance in the solid nature of my practice based on the knowledge imparted on me on the course. I am

therefore always confident and self-assured about my management of social work.

How has further study helped develop your career?

During the course of my career I have undertaken study in leadership, postgraduate study in management and been a trainer/consultant for some organisations. It has grounded me in the field and exposed me to various theories and thinking which have influenced my practice, decision-making and career progression.

What inspired you to become involved in children's welfare?

The fact that I can contribute to making a difference to a child's life, which would have long-term impact and influence their adult life inspired me to go into social work. I think charities like Barnardo's are important as they act as a voice for the voiceless and unheard children, young people and vulnerable adults in society. They are also able to reach families that statutory services sometimes find hard to reach. I have found that families tend to be more suspicious of mainstream statutory services but this is usually not the case with charities such as Barnardo's.





people with passion

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What do you enjoy most about being Assistant Director Children’s Services?

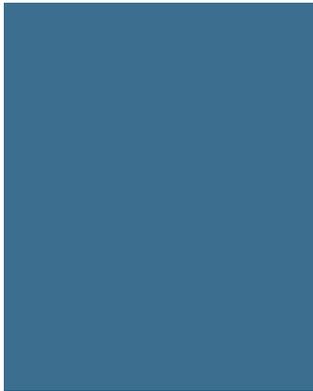
I very much enjoy the fact I can influence good practice and delivery of services to children, young people and their families. I also enjoy the fact I am able to influence the performance and professionalism of staff and contribute to their progress and development. Every day is different in my line of work. However, on what is closest to a typical day, I attend meetings, visit some of my services, trawl through my e-mails and make decisions on various issues including safeguarding, risk assessments, resources and employee issues amongst other things. I also manage two of Barnardo’s schools for children with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD). These are large schools with a joint total of about 200 teaching, care, support and specialist staff. I most enjoy the variety of projects that I have to manage which provides me a wide range of experience outside mainstream social work management. Management of schools is an experience I only acquired since joining Barnardo’s and one which I find invaluable.

What exciting projects are you working on at the moment?

I am currently working closely with one of Barnardo’s harmful sexual behaviour service to develop a region wide provision that would address the needs of local authorities within the South East of England for a specialist provision where children and young people who need to access this service are referred. I am also currently overseeing the expansion of the charity’s Community Mums and Dads service across Reading, which would work with volunteers and local groups within the community to deliver evidence-based intervention to parents, to ensure better outcomes for the children. This is quite exciting.

What advice would you give to students interested in a career in children’s services?

I would advise them to ensure they undertake child protection social work for at least two years after qualifying, as this would provide a solid foundation upon which they can build their career. Safeguarding the welfare of children is the primary concern of children’s services and this is the aspect of children’s services work practitioners find most stressful. This is because of the blame culture that exists in children’s social work, due to some unfortunate events resulting in child deaths. However, safeguarding is the most essential aspect of social work and one that all practitioners must have firsthand experience of whatever specialism they decide to pursue later in their children’s services careers. I would also advise current students to ensure they undertake postgraduate study in the field of social work, if not already undertaking this programme, in order to take advantage of the full breath the programme offers. This would assist them in deciding on the long-term specialism and career path to pursue and give them competitive advantage in their future careers.



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