



Niamh Mullan

Acting Senior Social
Work Practitioner

What does your job entail?

There's no such thing as a typical day for a Family Intervention Social Worker, but that's part of the appeal of doing this type of work!

Within my role, I support children between the ages of 0-18 and their families where they are experiencing problems. This can include addiction, domestic abuse, mental health difficulties, or general parenting. Many of the families I support face language barriers, which can often mean they struggle to access local services. My role is to assess the family situation and provide or signpost towards supports and interventions to empower families to improve their situation. I work in conjunction with the child/children, their family, their support network, and a range of other professionals from other disciplines such as teachers, midwives, health visitors, education welfare officers, court children's officers, and mental health professionals to agree and implement plans to ensure we are doing our best to improve the situation for the children within the family.

How did you get into this line of work?

From the age of 17, I worked in a residential and day care centre, mostly caring for adults with dementia. Alongside this, I studied Undergraduate Law at QUB. During my final year, I studied 'Child Law' as a module, and this really sparked my interest in high-profile safeguarding reviews and the role Social Workers play in the lives of children and their families, which inspired me to look into applying for the Social Work Degree.

Outline your career to date

I completed my first practice learning opportunity (placement) within one of the Family Intervention Teams and completed my second practice learning opportunity within an Integrated Care Team, both within the Southern Trust. I enjoyed both these opportunities thoroughly and was very well supported by both teams. Upon qualifying as a Social Worker, I initially worked in the Family Intervention Service within a different Trust area. In 2019, I moved to the Southern Trust and currently work within the team I completed my first placement.

Tell us about your qualifications and training

When I left school after completing my GCSEs, I completed a BTEC National Diploma in Sport at South West College, which was equivalent to 3 A-Levels. I then studied at Queen's University Belfast for three years, completing a Law Degree. Following this, I took a year out from education and worked in a residential and day care centre and also in a nursing home as a care assistant. During my year out, I also completed a counselling course. I then completed the graduate route Social Work Degree. I was able to do this in 2 years rather than 3 as I had previously completed a relevant degree. Since commencing my social work career, I have continued to engage in continuous professional development through the completion of additional training and postgraduate study.

Whats the best advice you've ever recieved?

You will never know everything! There is always room to progress and develop further as a professional. In my current role, no two days are ever the same, and there is very rarely a day that goes by that I don't learn something new.

What do you like to do in your spare time?

I have a busy family life and love spending time with my own children, partner, extended family, and friends. My older daughter is involved in sport and dancing, so I spend a lot of my spare time bringing her to these activities. When I have spare time, I enjoy going for walks on the beach, to the gym, or out for a nice meal.

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Follow your dreams and never give up. It is important to enjoy what you are doing, always strive to be the best you can be, be open to new opportunities but appreciate what is for you won't pass you by and what is meant to be will be.