
Allison Dare Little, MSW

Personal Background
- Hired through an international social work placement agency and granted a five year work visa.
- Employed Jan ‘09 to Nov ‘12 as a referral and assessment SW in Children and Youth Services (CYS)
- Investigated allegations of abuse and neglect of minors.
- Prior experience as an investigative SW in Asheville, NC and Jefferson, NC.

London is the Whole World in Miniature
- Diversity is the greatest benefit of working in London.
- I worked with colleagues and clients from over 60 countries representing all six inhabited continents.
- I worked with translators representing 17 languages.
- Bromley Borough is home to the largest permanently settled Traveler (“Gypsy”) population in England.
- Bromley also hosts a number of small refugee populations, including Iraqi, Afghan, and Somali.
- Among the more difficult issues encountered in practice were referrals related to female genital mutilation, honour-based violence, forced marriage, and unequal treatment of daughters.

Getting to Know London
- One of the more surprisingly challenging aspects of work in London was adapting to minor language differences.
- All foreign SWs are expected to adapt their speaking and writing to minimize confusion for speakers of British English, both native and learned.
- Learning to drive on the left was also a challenge!
- People often wanted to know what living in the U.S. is like.
- Some of the funnier questions I received were “did you ride a yellow school bus as kid?” and “do you know any cowboys?”

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Practice Guidance
- The majority of referrals were for issues such as substance misuse, family violence, and inappropriate discipline.

A Stronger Safety Net
- All residents are eligible for health care through the NHS.
- Child tax credits, jobless support, housing benefits, and other support create a strong safety net for families.
- The cost of living is high, though fewer children live in relative poverty.
- Investigation and case management involve social workers, police liaisons, school support, health (GP) support, and other community agencies.
- As with good social work practice all over the world, collaboration is key.