



Marie Tucker
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I am experienced and creative with a passion for getting the best for children in care and care leavers. My career spans over 25 years, studying the management of institutions at University and working directly with and for vulnerable children and adults. After working as a residential carer for several years, I achieved several promotions, eventually setting up and managing residential care homes for a national charity. This operational experience was invaluable when I started working in local authorities in 2001, commissioning services for young adults and care leavers. I began to focus my efforts on children in care and was appointed as a Commissioning Manager at a local authority, implementing the first known level playing field approach to securing care placements for children in care. This not only enabled improved matching and outcomes for children, but it also delivered significant financial savings for the local authority. I was a key person in designing the first regional foster care framework, co-ordinating local authority colleagues and foster care providers in the process. Prior to leaving my post, I joined the planning group for the national commissioning and contracts conference and each year I still help to plan a national conference, which largely focuses on commissioning services for children in care.

I was appointed as the Programme Manager for a Regional Improvement and Efficiency Programme, supporting Directors of Children's Services in the South West to deliver a programme of improvement that included developing the South West Safeguarding Procedures. In this post I supported sub-regional local authority consortia, facilitating partnership events between local authorities, independent children's homes and fostering providers.

In 2010 I decided to forge an independent path. This decision was due to my desire to have more autonomy in my role and to work creatively with individuals in the rich network I had established over the years. Further information on my current and recent work is detailed below. I am particularly proud of the voluntary work I do and have been responsible for influencing some positive changes in residential care settings, which children benefit from.

Having been a carer, a service manager, a commissioner, an advisor and advocate, I believe that, to have services which meet needs and which are efficient, we must make sure that the child is at the heart of everything we do. I believe our sector must become more dynamic, creative and forward thinking. We need to embrace advanced technologies, reduce duplication, implement lean systems, challenge attitudes to risk and create a culture of trust.

Above all, to provide children with the best services to meet their needs and to use our resources responsibly we have to focus on partnerships and the relationships in the sector. We have to drive forward the co-parenting ethos. We are people providing and commissioning services from people, for people. I relish opportunities to work with like-minded people and enjoy a healthy challenge!

CAREER SUMMARY

CICADA Consultancy (self employed) October 2010 – present.

Current work:

- Independent Investigating officer for complaints
- Associate for Nationwide Association of Fostering Providers (NAFP). I provide particular support and advice on commissioning and contracting issues and help develop positive relationships between members and the local authorities they work with.
- Regulation 44 visitor to children's homes
- Voluntary co-ordinator and chair of the South West Regulation 44 visitor network
- Ad hoc short term consultancy to fostering organisations, children's homes and local authorities

- Long term voluntary planning member for the Derby based National Children's Commissioning and Contracting Conference (NCCTC)

Previous projects:

- Associate for Link Maker, developing an online platform for matching children in care to placements in both foster care and children's homes.
- Research into the effectiveness and use of Regulation 44 reports for children's homes. (ICHA Associate)
- Voluntary consultant to the National Residential Care Review & Fostering Stocktake undertaken by Sir Martin Narey.
- Reviewing the financial stability, cost, price and value for money in the children's residential care market (IPC Associate)
- Reviewing Efficacy and Sustainability of Consortia Commissioning of Children's Services (England) (IPC Associate)
- Developing the capacity and increasing the diversity of provision in the children's social care system in England (Laing Buisson Associate)
- Supporting a local authority with a transfer of health and social care services to a private provider, project managing a social care interface project delegating social care tasks. (Devon Council and Virgin Care)
- Supporting providers of advocacy and community services through local authority tender processes enabling them to achieve a contract award (Reconstruct)
- Supporting children's homes providers with establishing quality assurance systems that enable the organisation to maintain national standards. (ICHA)
- Research on placement procedures and tools. This includes research on local authority methodologies for sourcing placements for children in care and the relevant legislation to support this. (ICHA)
- Support for an authority in developing their children services operational procedures and protocols (North Somerset)
- Supporting a local authority to develop a service plan (Wokingham)
- Developing and taking forward a marketing strategy for a private children's home provider (Signpost Children's Services)
- Developing an ISO approved quality assurance framework for a children's homes provider (Signpost Children's Services)
- Regional Research Project on service outcomes for Care Leavers (IPC)
- National research on the impact that placement procedures have on the stability of looked after children (IPC)
- Actively involved in developing the 2010 Care Planning and Placement regulations
- Contributing author to the sufficiency guidance for children in care.
- Voluntary advisor to the Education Select Committee on an inquiry into post 16 care options.

South West Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. Jan 2009 – March 2010

- Children's Programme Manager

Bath & North East Somerset Council. Jan 2003 – Jan 2009

- Commissioning Manager for Looked After Children

South Gloucestershire Council. September 2001 - Jan 2003

- Contracts Officer purchasing social care and educational services for adults and children.

SENSE, National Deafblind & Rubella Association. 1995 – 2001

- Manager responsible for setting up and managing new residential and community services for young adults
- Prior to my management responsibilities I worked directly with clients with highly complex and challenging needs in a 24-hour environment.

Training and Qualifications include:

Regulation 44 Training	2019
Level 3 Safeguarding Training	2019
NCCTC attendee	2003-2018
Prince 2 Qualified Foundation and Practitioner Project Management.	2010
Bath & NES procurement training.	2007
Certificate in Commissioning and Purchasing for Health & Social Care	2006
Certificate in Commissioning and Contracting	2002
Crisis Prevention Institute - Non-violent Crisis Intervention	2001
Institute for Applied Behaviour Analysis – Emergency Management	1999
National Examining Board of Supervisory Management - Managing Human Resources.	1998
Higher National Diploma - Hotel, Catering and Institutional Management	1993

Note: Over my career I have attended a plethora of seminars and workshops and have also presented at events. These are too many to list here, but I would be willing to provide further information upon request.

Additional Personal Information

I have lived abroad in developing countries and have worked voluntarily in schools and children’s homes in Ghana and Zambia. I am based near to good transport links and often travel widely across the UK. I enjoy networking, arranging community events, current affairs and a variety of outdoor pursuits such as cycling, swimming, wakeboarding and walking. I support a number of charities including Stepping Stones, an organisation responding to the violation of children’s rights due to beliefs in witchcraft and spirit possession. I am also a passionate supporter of NOWZAD canine rescue.

I hold an Enhanced DBS certificate and am signed up to the update service. (Certificate number 001592638440). I am also able to provide a number of references from both employers and staff that I have managed and also from current and recent clients. I’m particularly proud to also be able to provide referrals from care leavers!

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