

Curriculum Vitae of Gavin John Barker

Email: gavin@reallymad.org

Gavin Barker Curriculum Vitae

Profile

A dynamic, innovative and passionate Leader, Social Worker, Systemic Practitioner and Compassion Focused Therapist, committed to the principle of Social Justice with extensive experience of successfully supporting vulnerable children and young people in care, care leavers and their families.

Key Skills

- Skilled at the assessment and analysis of, and appropriate responses to, organisational, staff and service user, needs, threats and risks,
- Established track record of developing and leading services that really make a difference, achieve desired outcomes, and successfully contribute to the securing of Ofsted gradings of 'Outstanding,'
- Ability to empower, inspire, motivate, and support staff to make sense of the often, overwhelming challenges they face, to further develop their practice knowledge and skills so they can be confident in their ability to effect positive change to the lives of the young people they work with.

Career Summary

Interim Head of Service Intensive Youth Support Service (IYSS).

Current Post

In this role, I manage a multi-agency educational, youth development, contextual safeguarding, edge of care, crime prevention and therapeutic support service. The service provides a range of bespoke educational and social care related targeted interventions that support young people and their families who have been exposed to adverse childhood experiences and complex trauma.

Since starting this role in January 2024, I have introduced a new Systemic, Trauma Informed and Compassion Focused practice approach. This has empowered staff including Teachers, Family Support Workers, Social Worker's and Therapeutic Practitioners with the knowledge to develop a holistic understanding and make sense of challenging behaviours and the practical skills to effectively respond to the social emotional and mental health needs of the vulnerable young people referred to the service. I am now looking for a new opportunity closer to home in Bedford.

Service Manager Changing Futures Specialist Team-Westminster City Council. Nov 21 - Dec 23.

In this role I was part of Westminster City Council's (WCC) team that developed the winning bid for £3.5 million from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities – to fill the void in services for young adults in Westminster by establishing the pilot Changing Futures programme. I now manage their flag ship 'Specialist Service' supporting young people aged 17-25 experiencing multiple dis-advantage who present with histories of exposure to multiple adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and who as a result of their exposure to ACEs, now present with difficulties such as managing their emotional wellbeing and mental health, Drug and Alcohol misuse, Homelessness, Involvement in the criminal justice system and Other contextual safeguarding concerns including gang involvement and serious youth violence.

To date, I have effected change by innovating and developing the approaches necessary to support the high levels of need of the young adults many of whom are care leavers, referred to our service. This role required the establishment of a new multi-disciplinary service including: the development

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of a new trauma informed and compassion focused practice model, training and motivating of staff to ensure they are able to effectively use the model to effect change, remain motivated, hopeful and effective in the face of what many would see as overwhelming challenges, management of a multi-million-pound budget, relationship building and development of new partnerships with the Central & North West London (CNWL) NHS trust as well as a range of additional statutory and third sector housing, mental-health and substance misuse services.

Service Manager / Trauma Lead – WCC Intensive Support Service

Sep 16 – Nov 21

In this role I developed a Trauma Informed framework and set up a new Intensive Family Support and Edge of Care Service that consistently achieved an 87% or higher success rate in supporting families to 'repair' and 'stay together.' By also facilitating children in care to return home and by providing support to families with children on Child in Need and Child Protection plans to overcome their difficulties and achieve their full potential, the new service significantly contributed to Westminster Children's Services, twice achieving an 'outstanding' grading. In the most recent Ofsted report, the service was recognised as providing 'exemplary' and 'highly skilled assistance' to children and families.

As a result of the successful fusion of our Trauma Informed approach with a Compassion Focused framework that is particularly helpful for those struggling with issues of shame, anxiety and emotional regulation difficulties, my service was able to maintain our service provision throughout the Covid 19 lock down. Significantly we were also able to provide additional support for families identified as struggling with 'epidemic informed' emotional wellbeing difficulties.

Between September 2019 and November 2021, I was also the Trauma Lead for Westminster. This additional role involved leading on and supporting the whole of Children's Services to develop and embed their knowledge and skills in using, *trauma informed* and *compassion focused* frameworks and interventions. The role provided training, case consultations and support to Social Work, Children in Care, Youth Justice and Early Help teams, local schools and other voluntary sector partner organisations that enabled them to adopt a trauma informed approach.

Consultant Social Work Practitioner - Surrey Youth Support Service

Jul 16 – Sep 16

I was recruited into this role whilst I was still in Australia, however upon returning to the UK to take up my post, I was deployed into an alternative role to that which I applied for. This resulted in my resignation and move to my current job in Westminster.

Senior Clinician - Berry Street Victoria (Australia)

Jun 13 – Jun 16

As the Senior Clinician in Berry Street's state-wide Take Two Mental Health Service, my role was to facilitate a local Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisation (ACCO) to develop and deliver a new strategic / operational approach to support young people living in 'Kinship Care' placements and those who had exited the care system. This included training, supporting, modelling best practice and supervising staff to ensure they could deliver a range of high-quality, clinical assessment and therapeutic treatment services to traumatised and 'at risk' Aboriginal children, young people and their families.

In this role I also held a small caseload of complex cases and supported carers providing kinship and foster care support to Aboriginal children.

Team Leader – Berry Street Victoria (Australia)

Apr 12 – Jun 13

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As the manager of Berry Street's *Intensive Case Management Service* (Australian equivalent of *Targeted Youth Support / Leaving Care*) my responsibilities included training & supervising staff, managing complex cases, budget management, partnership building and liaison with the Department of Human Services who outsourced statutory case management responsibility to Berry Street.

Operations Director - Really MAD – Really Make A Difference (Fiji)

Jun10 – Apr 12

In this role I established a volunteer led Prevention and Early Intervention Youth and Family Support programme that included an Alternative to Custody, Youth Development and Entry to Employment Service, to meet the needs of up to 200 mainly unemployed families per year from socially deprived communities in Suva, the capital of Fiji. This involved working in partnership with Government departments, the securing of funds, management of budgets, recruitment, training, supervision and line management of both volunteer and employed staff.

Prevention Manager - Powys Youth Offending Service (YOS)

Jun 08 – Apr 10

As the Prevention Manager, I managed a team of practitioners and chaired the Youth Inclusion and Support Programme (YISP) multi agency panels. I was also responsible for the roll out of the pilot Common Assessment Framework and the co-ordination of their multi-agency panels and for the development of a range of individual and group work programmes, further developing the prevention strategy and representing and promoting the service at a variety of senior management, community and other levels.

Professional Studies

Aug 05 - Apr 08

Whilst completing a BSc (Hons) in Social Work at UWE, I simultaneously secured funding to provide parenting skills training to parents of young offenders in South Gloucestershire and to organise residential adventure programmes (RAPs) during the school summer holidays. These enabled groups of 10 'socially excluded' young people from Bristol to expand their horizons and develop a variety of communication and life skills.

Director - Really MAD - Really Make A Difference (Fiji)

Nov 04 - Aug 05

In this role, I provided consultation to the Fiji Ministry of Women, Social Welfare and Poverty Alleviation and facilitated the development and introduction of child protection legislation. This involved supporting local managers to develop a charter of 'minimum standards for residential child care' and then developing and delivering a training programme that ensured all key child care staff gained the knowledge and skills to implement the new standards.

Country Director - Raleigh International Youth Development

Jan 02 - Oct 04

As the Country Director in Costa Rica, Nicaragua and Fiji, I planned and managed all aspects of their 12 weeks long, overseas programmes. This included management of a £750,000 annual budget, networking with diplomatic staff, United Nations and other international NGOs to promote the programme, secure additional funds and identify projects, community liaison, risk assessing, training, supervision and management of 50 Volunteer staff and up to 150 volunteer participants per programme.

Deputy Manager - NCH Action for Children.

Jan 01 - Dec 01

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As a Deputy House Manager in the Cotswold Therapeutic Community, I was responsible for ensuring that the psycho dynamic care provision met resident's needs and for managing all aspects of the running of a residential home for traumatised young people.

Quetzaltridders (Guatemala)

Oct 98- Nov 00

I returned to Guatemala to further develop and manage the non-profit volunteer run ecotourism company I set up in 1995 to provide the funding for the 'EDELAC' project for street children. Today this programme continues to be volunteer run and provides the bulk of funds and ongoing sustainability for EDELAC including salaries for its 25-employed staff.

Leaving Care Worker - Surrey Accommodation and Aftercare Service.

Jul 97- Sep 98

In this role I was responsible for the assessment of need, the development of care plans case management of care leavers between the ages of 16 to 21 and provision of life skills training, information, advice and guidance.

Director - *Escuela De La Calle (EDELAC- Guatemala)*

Jan 95-May 96

Working as a volunteer, I developed the strategy to set up a self-funding, community led residential drug rehabilitation and independent living programme for street children between the ages of 10 – 17. This role required the establishment and management of small businesses to enable the programme to be self-funding and independent, the recruitment, training, support and supervision of 50 voluntary staff, management of rehab and youth support programmes, identification of apprenticeship opportunities, liaison with other NGOs, Government Officials and the UN.

Wandsworth Children's Services

Oct 91-Dec 94

Starting work as a Residential Social Worker and progressing to Deputy Manager, I quickly developed the skills, knowledge and abilities necessary to successfully work with children and young people who were 'at risk' and who lived within the Local Authority's Children's homes. Using a 'Behavioural Approach', I was responsible for key working some of the more difficult to engage and challenging young people and for managing/supervising junior staff.

Independent Travel Latin America

Jul 90-Aug 91

Samburu Development Project Kenya

Mar 90-Jun 90

After meeting members of the Samburu tribe whilst travelling independently in Northern Kenya, I lived with them for a period of 3 months during which time I established a potable water, eco-tourism and education project.

H. M. Forces - Royal Military Police

Jan 86-Oct 89

As an RMP Corporal, I was involved in general police duties/criminal investigations in BAOR.

Personal Profile

Date of Birth: 14th March 1968

Nationality: British

Education: BSc (Hons) Social Work, from the University of the West of England (UWE)

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PG Cert Family Therapy, from Latrobe University, Melbourne, Australia;
PG Dip Systemic Psychotherapy, from AFT
PG Cert Compassion Focused Therapy, from University of Derby
Training: Various including Certificates in Solution-Focused Brief Therapy, Cognitive Behaviour Therapy, Suicide First Aid, Theraplay, Acceptance & Commitment Therapy (ACT); facilitator for Parents as Partners, Compassion Focussed Therapy Level 1 and 2 (advanced), Qualified facilitator of Compassionate Mind Training
Status: Divorced
Interests: Social history, Jazz, travel, various sports inc off road motorcycling.

References available on request