Northern Ireland Social Care Council

Internationally Qualified Social Workers
Experiences

Name: Gosia

Organisation: Extern

Country: Poland

Additional Learning and Development:
100 Day placement in a social work role.

> "Do not give up. It looks terrifying but when you get in social work, you will find your work easier to do, than it was at the beginning of your big journey."

What are your thoughts about the journey to meeting the Northern Ireland Social Care Council social work standards?

When I realised I wanted to add to my social work training. I wasn't aware that placement needed to be full time hours. At the beginning I worried about how I would be able to find a healthy balance between being a full time student and family life. I have two young children and when I started my placement my youngest girl was only two months old. This was difficult to me to make such a big commitment but I had to put my emotions aside and persevere. I was faced with a lot of challenges and obstacles, commitment, new born baby, full time hours and then I discovered that I had to pay for my training and placement. This was a surprise for me as in Poland students do not pay for their education.

What do you enjoy about social work in Northern Ireland?

I had such a positive experience while working with the Extern Pathways Project which made me enjoy every minute. I learnt a lot through this placement. The amount of support I received from my co-workers, practice teacher and management help me to feel a part of a team. I never felt like I was on my own. This is so important when working with vulnerable young people and families.

What challenges have you experienced in settling into your social work role?

The biggest challenged I faced was being able to fully engaged the participants to work alongside me and the organisation, so that I could provide them with the help and support they need. Being able to build positive, appropriate and trustful relationships between me and the service users was a big barrier for me to overcome.