



SFA Alumni Profile



Tom Farnell – Safeguarding Officer

What do you do in your job?

I am a safeguarding and welfare officer/deputy designated safeguarding lead. Part of my role involves offering 1 to 1 social, emotional and mental health mentoring. The safeguarding aspect of the role means that I deal with external agencies (Children's services, police etc) and respond to any concerns or disclosures that are made by students.

How did you get to where you are?

My route was somewhat unconventional – I never planned to do this sort of work but now I couldn't imagine doing anything else. I tried to leave St Francis after GCSEs but failed to secure work so turned up for A levels. I didn't want to go to University but then realised I wasn't ready to work, so decided to give university a go. After graduating I struggled finding work but noticed a part time job at St Francis as a cover supervisor. From that it led to a full-time job and from that it led to teaching A level Psychology as an unqualified teacher! I did that for a few years and was sadly made redundant. I got a job at QMGS as a Pastoral support assistant, dealing with behaviour. After 2 years they created the position that I am in now and I was fortunate enough to get the role.

What has been your proudest achievement or what do you enjoy most about your job?

The thing I enjoy the most is that I get to make a difference. Sadly, I see students during the worst times of their lives but seeing them come through the other side makes it all worth it. I am also fortunate enough to have been able to write some articles for TES and OUP and also been published in an educational book too, so the job has provided me with a lot of opportunities.

What school subjects do you think are most useful to the job you do?

I draw a lot on my psychology knowledge as I am dealing with mental health issues etc but a lot of it is just down to the type of person you are and those 'soft skills' which are so important.