

Work placement is a very important thing to gain key experience, not only in relation to health and social care, but it gives you that feeling of what working is like, as not everyone has a job. Placement helps you to gain employability skills, which employers will look for and therefore makes you stand out more when applying for a job.

My work placement was at care home called Poppyfields and I attended it from early November 2019 to early February 2020. Poppyfields has different services within it, I was mainly based in the assessment unit where service users would come in and get assessed to find the best care and outcome possible for them. I did one to two days per week to boost my experience for my future career path. Managing both college classes and placement days would be different for each individual depending on how up-to-date you are with your coursework. It's essential that each week you're not doing too much because if you are, then you will be impacting your health and would have a back log of work, as you will be required to rush it and therefore, you may miss out on important research which you could add to achieving higher grades.

I gained my placement here by working closely with the West Nottinghamshire College placement coordinator to find the best place for me and my future profession. I contacted the service and introduced myself over the phone, but this also allowed me to arrange an induction with them. Having an induction was a key part, because not only are you receiving information about what you will be taking part in, but you are getting a chance to meet staff you'll be working with. On my first day they made me feel very comfortable and always insisted on me asking any questions and raising any concerns and made me feel welcomed as they were always checking on me throughout the day.

During placement, I developed a variety of different skills and improved on skills that I already had. Key skills I developed were communication, team work, patience and keeping a professional approach in any scenario that was to occur. Communication is a very important thing to have, not being able to communicate correctly can put service users at risk. Sometimes, I had to write things down for those that were fully or partially deaf or raise my tone for them to hear what I was saying. Another skill I improved was team work, I was constantly working with multiple carers and everyone had different suggestions in the best possible outcome for the patient, but it was important to all work together and use one idea for the best treatment for the service user. Another skill you need is patience, when working with different service users you need to take in to account that some may have disabilities, this can be from mobility needs or brain disorders like dementia, so therefore it takes them much longer to move around and respond, so having good patience is valuable when working with service users.

Placement was very eye-opening for me. Before I started, I already knew that I wanted to have a future in healthcare but doing my work experience made me feel more certain that I wanted to go down a health care profession route, mainly something like an ambulance technician or paramedic. Whilst studying different units in relation to health and social care at college, I linked a lot with what I was doing at placement for instance knowing the polices, procedures and legislations were ideal as they were used throughout the care home, one being the Data Protection Act 1998 which was applied by ensuring that all service users' records were kept confidential and only spoken with the relevant carers, who would be in contact with them. We used secure locations like an office and not the staff room to have conversations about the service users, as if that was to occur, we could be breaching and breaking their confidentiality rights.

Studying safeguarding at college was also ideal, as this allowed me to understand the meaning of safeguarding and different types of abuse that a service user could be exposed to, therefore, it made me more aware that all service users were kept safe and away from danger and abuse.

Throughout placement, there were many different challenges in which I was faced with. The main one would be when a service user had a seizure, which was eye opening as I've never witnessed one before. It was important for me to help the other carer in doing the best we could for that patient whilst waiting for the ambulance crew to arrive. This consisted of getting her out of a chair safely and into a recovery position which protected their airway from any blockages, then making sure her head was secured and protected if she was to go into a seizure again. This was a very challenging experience for me to be involved in, as I was required to help in the moving of her and getting additional staff members to help remove the other service users from the area, so their dignity was maintained.

Anyone that is looking to go into a health care career should always gain experience from a health and social care setting - from care homes to day services. Attending these not only gives you good experience of what to expect, but will also make you stand out to employers as they will see that you can work with others in a service. Even if you aren't wanting to do a job in health care, still attending some type of work experience is helpful as it shows that you make an effort in working - from dressing correctly, using a professional manner and attending each day, showing that you are reliable will help you in your future.

I would totally recommend my placement at Poppyfields to anyone, as the staff at the care home were very kind and helpful making sure that all my needs were met and resolved. They were always looking to boost my experience in trying their best to match my career path as a paramedic, so when ambulances or doctors attended to treat the residents, they let me go and see certain procedures and ways they would work with the service users, making sure that this was okay to do so with the professionals and service users. West Notts helped my placement experience a lot as they provided booklets which I could fill in and reflect on my experience. They also supported me in making sure that I was completing the correct amount of hours and the placement itself was safe for me to do my work experience.