

Andrew's Story

When he was offered a place on the Professional Careers Programme, Andrew was anxious about performing at graduate level. He did not have experience working at this level. However, he did have two degrees, and we were confident that he had the skills to succeed.

The Equality Academy arranged a placement for Andrew within his Health Board's Learning and Development department. His placement



initially involved HR administration, but quickly developed into working on the implementation of a new training system.

The Health Board fully integrated Andrew into their team and culture:

"I have been included in all aspects of the work of the team and treated the same as any other member of staff. I have been able to sit in on many of the meetings that take place around our team be they, Senior

Management or Organisation Group meetings. This has allowed me to truly feel part of the senior management team for the department... I was always treated fairly and respect the same as any other member of our team. I appreciated that my manager was able to see that my disability was not going to hold me back and set the same level of expectation on my work as they had of anyone else's work. The fact that they valued my work and input the same as anyone else's regardless of

disability really helped my confidence as this showed me that my disability doesn't stop me from working at this level.”

By the end of his placement, Andrew was leading on an employability project that ranged from working with the Princes Trust to opportunities for care experienced young people and young people with additional support needs. He managed the Prince's Trust project from beginning to end, which involved tasks like regular meetings with the Princes Trust and selection of candidates.

As a result of his work, many of the young people involved in the project are in line to be offered a post within his organisation.

He was particularly proud of gaining valuable transferrable skills around stakeholder engagement.

Unfortunately, for a substantial part of his placement, Andrew's fiancé became ill and was hospitalised. We were very proud of how Andrew was able to achieve so much despite the challenges this raised for him. He was a carer, a parent and a successful employee who was providing opportunities for people from disadvantaged groups.

Agreement on flexible working arrangements enabled Andrew to make suitable alternative arrangements for child-care. Andrew agreed with GCIL and NHS line manager that he could split time between office and home. GCIL approved parental leave and Andrew to arrange additional leave when needed. He noted: “If it had not been for their understanding and support I would not have been able to continue with my placement... the staff from the equality academy are fantastic and will genuinely offer every support they can to allow you to thrive in your placement.”

Andrew said about his experiences: “The major lesson that I have learned is to always back my own abilities and believe in myself much more than I did previously. The programme has certainly given me a degree of self-confidence that I didn't have before.”

We feel that Andrew's story is about how recognition, opportunity and support can help individuals to be resilient to any challenge that they face.

