

Rob's Story

During the third year of his architectural studies, Rob was diagnosed with a degenerative eye disease leading to a loss of central vision and colour blindness. After an extended period at University, Rob graduated with a 1st Class Honours degree, then in 2010 he graduated with a PhD focusing on inclusive design principles for people with different types and degree of vision loss.



Rob spent the next six years between various unpaid and voluntary roles within local authority and the charity sector before travelling to Australia, where he worked as an Access Consultant. Following his return to the UK in 2016, Rob then spent a further two years searching for salaried employment without success until he spotted the advertisement for the 2018 Equality Academy Graduate Trainee Programme.

This opportunity couldn't have come along at a better time as Rob had given up hope that he would ever find meaningful employment. Rob commented that his mental health was suffering and his "confidence was at an all-time low". After applying and successfully securing a place on the programme, Rob started his 24-month placement at the Golden Jubilee National Hospital in January 2018.

Rob received assistance from Access to Work to ensure he was provided with the right technology and equipment to fulfil the requirements of his role. This included Zoomtext Magnifier/Screen reader, HD large screen monitor and surface Pro tablet with large print keyboard. Rob also received adjustments to his working environment

including a personalised space with dimmable lighting and a grant for taxi travel to and from work.

During his two-year placement, Rob was based primarily in the Hospital Expansion Team where he worked on a number of exciting projects including the Interior design and Wayfinding strategy for Phase 1 & 2 hospital expansions. Rob also designed a proposal for enhanced accessibility features within new self-check in kiosks which was approved by the Board and is currently being developed for release later in 2020.

Rob was encouraged to undertake additional training to strengthen his career portfolio. With support from his placement supervisor and the NHS, Rob successfully gained both Foundation and Practitioner accreditation in PRINCE2 Project Management.

Throughout his placement, Rob was conscious that this was a time limited opportunity to grow, develop and network in a professional setting. He added “opportunities like this don’t come round every day and I was determined not to return back to my unemployed days”. This strategy paid off and towards the end of his placement, Rob was faced with the difficult task of choosing between two competing job offers. Rob’s positive experience working within the NHS was the deciding factor in his decision to accept the role of ‘Service Design & Equalities Lead at NHS Golden Jubilee’ effective from January 2020.

After completing his placement, Rob commented: “This opportunity has completely changed the direction of my life. I owe a huge thanks to everyone at the GCIL Equality Academy and particularly my placement supervisor, Marjorie, who provided first class support and guidance every step of the way throughout my personal and professional journey”.