

Students Placements in the Community and Disability Sector

Have you considered where to work when you graduate?

Do you enjoy working with people and supporting them to achieve their goals and aspirations?

Do you want to be in a job that allows you to be creative and innovative in the way you provide support?

Student placements within the Disability Sector

Will I get the “right kind” of experience to complete my University requirements?

Yes. Many students are concerned they won't be able to complete certain sections on a placement assessment tool. Students that have completed a placement within the disability sector soon realise they have unique opportunities to see how the skills they are being assessed are interpreted within a person centred approach to supporting people living with disability. Most say the experience has supported them to think critically when considering assessment and intervention and consider more than the individual but also their home, family and community in planning for support. Other students comment the opportunities to work in collaboration with professionals from a variety of professional backgrounds as an advantage when moving into the work force.

I don't know anyone living with disability. Am I suited to a placement within the disability sector?

Yes. If you enjoy working with people and want to support a person to work on the

areas they identify and need support to improve then you will be suited for a placement within the disability sector. Being “person centred” means we consider the people, their individual hopes, dreams and aspirations before their disability. A placement in the disability sector provides a great opportunity to use knowledge developed at university to think creatively about implementing interventions.

What can I expect a typical day to look like when I am on placement?

When completing a student placement within the disability sector you can expect that no day will be the same. Professionals support people where they live, learn, work and socialise. This means you could be visiting people in their homes, childcare settings, schools, work places and in the community e.g. sporting clubs and shopping centres. Students will also have the opportunity to learn how other professionals bring their expertise and experience to the team to provide integrated support for a person living with disability.

Students Placements in the Community and Disability Sector

What have you heard about working within the Disability Sector?

I'm a new graduate. Will I have the skills to work within the disability sector?

Yes, many new graduates start their careers working within the disability sector. Some have had experience completing student placements within organisations that support people living with disability, whilst others enjoy consider this work because they want to experience working closely with people and having the flexibility to support people in new and innovative ways.

Many of the theoretical principles and practical skills learnt at university and built upon during placements can be implemented in the disability sector.

What kind of support is available for me to develop my clinical and professional skills?

Work within the disability sector will challenge all professionals to develop specialist clinical skills and use other personal and professional skills effectively e.g. communication and negotiation skills to support people living with disability whilst collaborating with other important people in their life.

Organisations know that these skills can develop with the right kind of professional support and access to clinical supervision. These opportunities are available to all professionals working within the disability sector. Whether it is an opportunity to meet with a clinical supervisor for supervision or gaining support from others in your team there are many ways to get the support you need in the workplace.

What kind of benefits can I expect if I consider work within the disability sector?

If you value the opportunity to think creatively, consider approaches to support people that are innovative or work flexibly to meet the needs of people living with disability then you can expect to find work within the disability sector rewarding.

Work within the disability sector facilitates strong professional relationships and teamwork as professionals work collaboratively to meet the needs of their clients. This promotes a greater understanding of the roles of other disciplines and helps a each professional to provide holistic, person-centred care.

Organisations recognise that work with the disability sector can also be challenging emotionally for professionals. Often organisations have systems and incentives in place to help support professionals. This may include additional employee benefits e.g. additional leave provisions, work flexibility and access to salary sacrifice and tax benefits.

What's the best place to start?

Consider a student placement at an organisation that supports people with a disability. A student placement is a great opportunity to experience what work may be like as a new graduate within the sector, meet a variety of people living with disability and make valuable connections with professionals working within the sector.

Students Placements in the Community and Disability Sector

Consider a job within the Disability Sector.

When you choose to work within the disability sector you have an opportunity not only to develop specialist skills in supporting people living with disability in their community but you can make a real difference in that person's life and the lives of families, friends and people in their community.

There has never been a better time to work within the disability sector. The introduction of the National Disability Insurance Scheme (NDIS) means that people living with disability and their families will be seeking support from a range of professionals to assist them in reaching their individual goals and aspirations. It is a great opportunity for people who have specific qualifications e.g. Allied Health professionals as well as people who enjoy working flexibly and trying out new ways of working.

Organisations within the disability sector have infrastructure and resources available to ensure that all people working within the disability sector have opportunities to grow professionally and have access to clinical supervision. New graduates are encouraged to start their work life within the community and disability sector and take the opportunity to develop as a professional within a dynamic and innovative sector.