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Current role

I am currently working as Director of Elfrida Rathbone Camden. We provide services to people with learning difficulties, disabilities and families under stress.

Career experiences



When I came to study in Birmingham I was seconded from a post at Bedfordshire Council's services for Deaf people, and immediately after graduating I returned to this role. Early highlights of my career include working with the Greater London Association of Disabled People (GLAD) and then spending two years with the Deaf Association of New Zealand, having been inspired to work abroad during my studies in Birmingham. Following my return from New Zealand I worked in roles including a project to support groups led by Black and ethnic minority service users, as a social worker in a Disabled Children's team, on a young carers' project and on a project to improve services for boys and fathers. In 2003 I undertook my first management role with Family Service Units, and in 2007 I joined Elfrida Rathbone Camden as Director

In my current role I enjoy the engagement with the wishes of services users and being responsive to local communities. I really appreciate the innovation and diversity that is found within the voluntary sector, as well as the strong team work ethos.

Expectations and experiences of Birmingham

During my time as a student in Birmingham I loved the course and material I was studying. I also enjoyed the community placements and the opportunity to get to know the city and local people.

I didn't really know what to expect in terms of living in Birmingham but I was enthused about the course and wanted to be challenged. The course fulfilled these expectations and I enjoyed learning, especially about service user empowerment and welfare rights. I found that the city itself was more friendly and intimate than I had imagined it would be.

Advice for current students

I would advise current students not to be passive learners! Take action if things aren't going well. Be proactive in arranging your placements. Take part as much as possible, even if that involves a risk of exposure. Don't forget to enjoy the city.

Growth and changes through study

Studying at Birmingham made me more confident about speaking up. I developed a sense of welfare rights, user rights and anti-poverty perspectives. Importantly, my experience repaired my image of myself as a good learner.

The experience of putting forward and defending propositions has stood me in good stead for further study and career development. I enjoy exploring more 'obscure' areas of knowledge rather than just the headlines and I am currently undertaking a Masters in Advanced Social Work at Westminster.

Alumni support

I was inspired to come back and talk to students because I enjoyed my course and want to share my enthusiasm with new students. Any alumni thinking about volunteering to support the Birmingham student experience should do it – their experience is relevant, and people need to know the benefits of persevering in their career path!

Graduate employment

In order to differentiate themselves in today's employment market, graduates need to maintain high quality professional standards in the workplace as well as in their course work and exams.