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I began university passionate about social justice and making a difference in the world, but without much of a clue about what that entailed! Social Policy gave me a wealth of knowledge that I could put into practise, useful frameworks for my thoughts and an insight into how the world I was seeking to change works.

My long-term plan is to work in politics but I'm going to get there the long way round. I want to work with grassroots charities and community groups first. I want to understand people and I want to know the best ways to help the disadvantaged - to hear it from the horse's mouth. I currently work as an addictions support worker for a non-profit organisation that supports men and women recovering from drug and alcohol addictions, with the aim to reintroduce them into employment and independent living. My role includes running support groups, teaching life-skills, one-to-one keyworking and helping facilitate the recovery program, and I really enjoy it.

I loved studying Comparative Social Policy and I'm currently in the process of planning a trip overseas to see how they look after addicts in other cultures, which I think will benefit me a lot (and hopefully I can share something with them too). Another brilliant part of the Social Policy course was the encouragement and motivation I was given by lecturers to participate in voluntary work while I was at university, which lead me to work with a host of different kinds of people - including rough sleepers and disadvantaged young people.

Looking back, I think that studying Social Policy gave me a sense of the history that this country has of trying to better itself, of applying the simple truths of loving your neighbour to a whole community and of having confidence that change can happen. It also gave me a knowledge of the inequality, deprivation and poverty that has not yet been beaten. In a way the Social Policy department at the University of Birmingham is passing on the mantle of Beveridge, Rowntree and other great social reformers to a new generation.