

## Amy Davenport, BA Social Policy (2013)

Organisation: Health Exchange

### Organisation background

Health Exchange are a local social enterprise based in the Digbeth area of Birmingham. They support people in the West Midlands to make informed lifestyle choices that improve their health and wellbeing, as well as tackling health inequalities. Health Exchange provides and develops services on behalf of the NHS, PCTs, GP, local authorities and other bodies.

### Amy's background

Amy completed a BA Social Policy degree, graduating in 2013. Whilst she was studying she also made the most of her time by working for her department and the university in a number of different capabilities. This ranged from supporting staff at open days and applicant visit days, leading tours and working for the marketing department, encouraging potential students to apply to UoB.

During the summer of 2013, Amy completed a four week placement in Birmingham City Council as a Research Assistant in the Corporate Strategy Department.

She continued to use [Careers Network \(/undergraduate/careers/careers-network.aspx\)](#) and saw the Graduate Internship role with Health Exchange advertised on Careers Connect.



### Interview with Amy

#### What made you apply for the opportunity?

I applied for the job because it looked like a natural continuation from my previous research internship, except it was longer and with more requirements to the role. I was notified about this role as I was coming to the end of my previous internship by the University and applied for it as soon as.

#### What were your preconceptions before starting the role and what were your first impressions?

Having done research work in my degree and previous role, I was slightly more prepared for the workload. However, the preconceptions that I did have revolved around the people I was to work with and the fast paced environment of a social enterprise. My first impressions were that everyone was very welcoming in my induction and that there was a lot of work to be done! I think getting stuck in helped my transition quite well and, being in the role of a researcher, I got to work with pretty much everyone so it is a nice way to get to know the company, the people and the work.

#### What do you hope to develop during the internship?

During this internship, I hope to develop my understanding of the public health system as it is something I am considering going into in the future. Additionally, as networking events have been crucial in my role, I hope to continue doing this through the remainder of my internship and hopefully develop some useful contacts.

#### Please provide an outline of your main duties

My main duty is to support the company in their research needs. However, this can be broken down. Being one of two researchers, I primarily deal with the development aspect of the company. So, for example, if a tender comes out to us and the company wishes to bid for it, a lot of grounded research is needed to identify if there is an actual need and relevancy for the company. As the company has many service branches, this can happen quite frequently and unpredictably. Another role that I have taken on whilst being at Health Exchange is in events and marketing. Whilst on my placement, the company released their first commercial product and I supported some of the events with this.

#### Please provide an overview of the progress you have made during your internship

In terms of progress, I have had some briefings and meetings alongside my workload. On one hand, these have been helpful as little check-ins every now and then. On the other hand, I have felt that the infrequency of them has shown that I have not needed continuous monitoring or assistance and have just been able to get on with my work.

Overall, I feel that my internship has served me well as has given me a lot of confidence and a better skill set for my career. My view on social enterprises has changed enormously as I now have a new understanding of its fast-paced nature and the importance it has in delivering to communities that may find it difficult to get help and support from other, more traditional access points. Looking beyond my internship, I now find myself looking for what social enterprises there are and what opportunities they have.

### Employer's thoughts

#### Jennifer Jones-Rigby, Intervention Services Manager at Health Exchange

Jennifer felt that Amy's previous experience in research, gained from her placement at Birmingham City Council, helped her stand out in the application process. It showed that she was someone who was willing to do something with their free time and that she could learn new skills very quickly.

Jennifer feels that the internship has worked really well and that Amy is a good testament to the University. Being able to respond quickly to work is critical to Health Exchange and Amy has proved that she can do this, being part of the team from day one.

*Health Exchange is keen to work with local academic institutions and see the benefits of having a fresh pair of eyes, a fresh voice and a younger point of view.*