



STUDENT PLACEMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The New Futures Project as a Placement opportunity and Learning experience

The NFP has a variety of *clients* who they support, and this can include:

- street sex workers
- sex workers in saunas
- ‘sugar babes’
- adults and young people who have experienced human slavery or trafficking
- women in need
- young people who may need support and counselling (this is not an exhaustive list).

NFP supports women who choose to continue participating in sex work, along with helping them create positive changes in their lives... sometimes supporting in making steps towards leaving sex work. We run a recovery programme at the project that includes education and training, counselling, specialist support such as the Freedom Programme, help with employment and volunteering opportunities, and therapeutic group work.

We offer students an opportunity to work in a non-statutory social work environment and to gain an in depth insight into working with women in sex work. Students are able to develop an understanding of what is involved for vulnerable adults and young people, the risks they encounter, support professionals can provide, as well as other agencies which can relate.

Students *working alongside agencies* such as:

- Turning Point
- the Dawn Centre
- Juniper Lodge
- Zinthiya Trust
- Baby Basics (this is not an exhaustive list).

This allows students to support clients who are experiencing substance use, are involved in the criminal justice system, have housing difficulties, are experiencing abuse from partners and other perpetrators, along with support if they have children.

This highlights the varied opportunities students have during a learning experience at the Project and the effective multiagency working they will engage in whilst working independently with their own clients.

Supervisions and group meetings are vital during placement. Supervisions vary from group to individual and are with the On-Site Supervisor or Practice Educator weekly. These supervisions include a range of discussions and debates, whilst incorporating theories, legislation, approaches in social work.

*Examples of **topics** focused upon in Supervision are as follows:*

- Patriarchy
- Britain's child drug runners
- Sugar Dating Culture
- Americas Child Brides
- Honduras – women's rights
- Human trafficking/modern slavery approaches
- Health issues relevant to homelessness
- Adverse Childhood Experiences (and many more!)

The NFP offers an **Outreach** service which patrols the town centre, to support anybody who appears vulnerable - the team drives around areas used for sex work, to offer support to street sex workers (for example, giving out condoms, recording names of perpetrators of abuse, and more). Students are also able to gain an understanding and appreciation of what Outreach entails, along with supporting clients and possible vulnerable adults/young people in the community.

Additionally at the **Projects Drop-In Service**, students are able to help out colleagues and support clients who choose to come into the Project for particular services. These can include practical, emotional and crisis support and tasks vary from:

- taking food parcels and having a hot meal
- mental health and counselling sessions with staff members
- retrieving clean drug use equipment, condoms, clothes
- or just having a one to one conversation with a staff member.

In terms of **developing knowledge** students will do this through both their practical casework, research and supervisions and are able to focus on incorporating the following legislations into their work: The Sexual Offences Act (2003), The Care Act (2014), Modern Slavery Act (2015), Human Rights Act (1998). Furthermore, with regards to working with young people, and perhaps cases of Child Sexual Exploitation, the Childrens Act (1989; 2004) would also be relevant. Considering these legislations throughout work at the Project can enable students to develop their competency further in regard to relating cases to the law, and what can/cannot be done in a non-statutory setting. Also, there are many theories and methods that the Project will encourage students to consider during the placement, for example:

- Person-centered Approach
- Systems Theory
- Attachment Theory
- Task-Centered approach
- Solution-focused Approach
- Mertons Strain Theory
- Strengths-Based Practice
- Feminist Theory (this is not an exhaustive list)

Reflecting upon these theories and approaches in Social Work can enable the students to practice in an anti-oppressive manner through relationship-based practice, ensuring that the Clients voice is heard, there is choice and control, along with empowering the Clients.

What can be achieved through a Placement at the NFP (*not an exhaustive list*)

- Multiagency working with other agencies to enable clients to retrieve certain items that are needed, or for specific support
- Completing assessments for/with clients – for example: Star Assessments, Young Person Transition Plan Assessments
- Completing application and referral forms for clients – for example: Exiting Referral form, referral forms for other agencies support
- Undertaking and leading a workshop for new students on placement – this could involve leading sessions with new students on different subjects
- Being involved in various Trainings (such as trauma informed practice, modern slavery, homelessness) and possibly receive certificates for these
- Working with clients, and developing a rapport, with Clients from various different backgrounds, who have diverse needs. For example, women who may be incarcerated, current sex workers, ex sex workers, young people with mental health difficulties, young people with children
- Having their own caseload and clients who they support on a daily basis – overlooked and supported by the On-Site Supervisor and Practice Educator
- Interagency working with colleagues to ensure clients are receiving the current information regarding the project (for example times for food parcel collections), as well as information regarding the clients specifically (for instance, through Handovers)

Feedback from previous Students, on having NFP as a Placement opportunity

These will be presented under specific headings which have been included on 'Placement Evaluation Forms'

- **How would you describe your placement at The New Futures Project?**

'It was a good experience and I enjoyed it to the last day...it was a huge experience which allowed me to apply child protection, mental health and adult safeguarding knowledge acquired during lectures and placement training. It helped me to appreciate the social service system and multi-agency approach in practice.'

'The placement was extremely informative and surprisingly interactive and supportive giving that we were remote working. I did not know what to expect initially as I had not worked with the service-user group that the project support before, nor had I worked from home before. However, the experience was invaluable in many ways including research and developing our knowledge in multiple areas and receiving second to none supervision and support throughout.'

'The best placement...I had been asking/hoping for this placement setting since starting my course and I am so lucky to have been able to get it as it was more than what I could have hoped for in a placement. This placement not only changed and improved my outlook on certain sectors of the world, and my appreciation of non-statutory social work increasing, but it also improved and supported many aspects of my personal life and the type of person I aspire to be. If I could redo this placement from the beginning, I would – it has been an amazing learning experience, as well as getting to know and building relationships with the best colleagues.'

- **Did you feel supported throughout your placement? Yes/No – why**

'I am grateful to the support which my practice supervisor and practice educator provided during supervision. What I noticed to be important was the availability of support at any point in time and how my supervisor would respond quickly when I seek assistance with my clients and working papers...Support was provided through research materials relevant for our caseloads, weekly presentations and discussions. During supervision session, there was time to discuss any challenges being faced, I felt supported every time to balance work and the covid-19 pandemic stress.'

'I felt OVER supported. I used a superlative because all members of staff at The New Future work as a Team.'

'Yes, this was definitely one of the main strengths of the project.'

'I was lucky enough to have got the best, most supportive and inspirational PE and OSS. They both supported me throughout everything – both placement, and personal life...I never felt unsupported throughout my placement and from the beginning my OSS made it clear/genuinely showed us that she cared for our personal wellbeing.'

- **What have you learnt throughout your placement?**

'I have learnt to respect other people's opinion during our weekly discussions. Our opinions are shaped by our values, and most importantly I have learnt to put professional values ahead of personal values in all controversial matters.'

'I know myself a lot better, I became more critically reflective.'

'There is just so much that I have learnt throughout this placement and it all cant fit into one box. But overall, I have learnt to advocate for what I believe in, I have learnt to appreciate the marginalised groups in society who may need support but don't know where to start, I have learnt that all individuals in society should have a voice and choice, and I have learnt that the Project allows for all women and young people to feel supported and cared about... This placement really did emphasise to me how a non-statutory placement, especially women based, can empower individuals' rights, voice and choice – along with showing how they strive to meet The International Federation of Social Workers best practice standards.'

- **Did you feel that the placement challenged you and your learning?**

'During the placement, I was constantly challenged. The increased reflective ability and skills I acquired during supervisions, in manging cases, in collaboration with other partnering agencies challenged my learning.'

'Yes, from the topics explored, working remotely from home and navigating laptops with no direct support was challenging in many ways. However, I feel like these challenges have made me stronger and more determined than ever. Over a short period, I have developed and grown as a student social worker and I feel ready to complete my second placement.'

'this placement challenged me in terms of altering my opinion on marginalised sectors in society – for instance, the main one being sex workers who are also drug users, as well as sex workers who may be stuck in an abusive/violent relationship... My OSS would also challenge us to consider what we as social work practitioners could do to advocate on behalf of these disadvantaged societies and individuals and how we/other agencies could support them.'

- **Did the placement provide opportunities for developing knowledge, skills and understanding of anti-oppressive practice?**

'Working in partnership with service users promoting involvement and participation was the main key feature of an anti-oppressive approach which retains service user's control of their life.'

'In regards to anti-oppressive practice this is ingrained within the organisation. The service-users experience discrimination and oppression on many levels, this is something workers from the organisation must battle regularly. I was very cautious of my behavior and language as not to oppress this group further.'

'Yes, the placement went above and beyond when doing this. My knowledge in a lot of areas of social work and injustices were expanded and improved – for instance, women who are

incarcerated (I was able to support my client in this situation), young boys/girls involved in county lines, mums selling their kids of sex, sugar dating/babies, modern slavery and exploitation, worst place for a woman to live, and many more...My skills in terms of relationship based practice, strengths based approach, as well as multiagency and interagency working definitely improved – especially through a remote placement where I work working from home...As well as the skill of taking care for ones self – this one was key throughout this placement and was advocated upon by both my PE and OSS...this placement clearly included [anti-oppressive practice] in all their work with clients and I really appreciated that. It showed me their care and value of individuals in society, and the placement showed me different ways in which I could incorporate anti-oppressive practice during social work, even through small ways like allowing someone to have a choice of who they work with/are supported by.'

- **Which aspects of the placement did you find most useful?**

'I found the Group supervision most useful. I thrive when I work within teams, and it was a joy to learn, listen and share in the wealth of knowledge of the teams. I also enjoyed the individual supervisions. It provided a space where I could be ME. I could boldly explore my fears, anxieties, weakness, strengths, and generally any issues that impact my placement.'

'Literally everything. All aspects of this placement were useful, I wouldn't want anything to change and I don't think anything could be improved on as everything this placement included/did was valuable and helpful to my learning.'

- **What did you enjoy about placement?**

'I enjoyed people, my teammates, the constant research prior to Group or individual supervision. I enjoyed immensely the Group Supervision that explored the Baron and Baroness issue. It completely transformed my thinking and practice.'

'As my passion is CSE and County Lines, connecting the 'dots' into adulthood and using theories to explain this.'

'Everything! It was an amazing experience and something that I will take with me as I progress into social work.'

'Everything – every single thing. From when I first started and had the 2 week induction, to getting my own clients and establishing a rapport, to leading my own sessions to new students, creating presentations on areas of work which I found interesting, to having my own lead on how I go about my learning experience, whilst equally having direction and support from my OSS on a daily basis.'

- **Is there anything about the placement experience that could be improved?**

'Nothing that I noticed.'

'Nope – it was amazing in every way. I wish I was able to experience working in the project and doing outreach, but due to being a remote placement (for university and personal reasons) I wasn't able to do this. Yet, I was able to fully be involved with my clients and enjoy every aspect of this placement – I don't feel like I was disadvantaged or missed out.'

- **Do you have any comments regarding your placement?**

I am grateful to this learning opportunity which NFP has granted me. I enjoyed the supportive working environment which made me feel comfortable and work to achieve the objectives of the organisation.

AB is an excellent supervisor and is always there if support is needed...AB will encourage you and push you to enable the best outcomes professionally.

'Saying 'thankyou' isn't enough to express the words I have for this amazing learning opportunity/experience...If everyone could get the opportunity to undertake a placement here at the NFP, it would do the world good. I feel like I am such a different person to when I started this placement, and I couldn't be more thankful for everything my OSS/PE have done for me – even things they don't know they've done. My confidence/self esteem was worked upon in this placement, and it really has been valuable and just shows how caring the OSS/PE are at the NFP...Wish this experience wasn't coming to an end, but overall I really do appreciate everything this placement has taught me, given me, and the opened my eyes too – showing me the kind of social work practitioner, and human general in person, that I inspire to become/improve upon every day.'

Overall – Why have a learning experience through a Placement at the NFP?

If you have any questions then please watch the video that is included on the website, email abi@new-futures.org.uk or you could even pop into the project to have look at the environment you could be working in!

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