



SWDTP Placement Scheme Final Report

Please report back on your placement experience within one month of completion. Your report is vital for helping the SWDTP monitor the effectiveness and quality of placements, as well as helping us to build better links with partner organisations. We may also use your feedback on the website, as a feature in the SWDTP Newsletter, as a full case study or for other promotional work.

You may wish to arrange an informal chat with the Jackson Paterson, Jackson.Paterson@bristol.ac.uk the Collaboration Facilitator, to talk about broader aspects of your placement, to help develop a case study and any thoughts you may have for developing or improving our placements scheme. We may also ask you to help mentor students who are considering placement opportunities themselves.

Student Name	[Redacted]
Placement Organisation	[Redacted] A charity focusing on LGTB+ support and advocacy

Please give a summary of the placement and the work/activities you undertook. Include details of any workshops, talks, presentations, media activity or other public or stakeholder events in which you were involved
I completed my placement between [redacted] at [the organisation], an LGBT+ led charity that aims to improve wellbeing and inclusion, and offers help, support and advocacy to LGBT+ people across the Southwest (Cornwall and Devon). My placement with [the organisation] took place at their Exeter office and consisted of two parts: <i>Shadowing:</i> I received a full induction, familiarising myself with the policies and procedures, including safeguarding, confidentiality, and data protection, as well as completing the LGBT+ workplace training that [the organisation] provides to clients. I was able to get an insight into research done by [the organisation] and other LGBT+ organisations nationally. During my placement I had the opportunity to shadow different members of staff across the range of services that [the organisation] offer, including the helpline, help, support and advocacy (HSA), and working with the management team. As part of my shadowing, I was able to shadow a range of client meetings with LGBT+ practitioners providing insight into the challenges faced by LGBT+ people and how they are supported by [the organisation]. I also shadowed the schools worker at several LGBT+ groups across secondary schools in Devon. This shadowing also included visiting the teams at [the organisation's] other offices in [redacted]. I was also able to attend [redacted] Pride as a part of the team, march in the parade and work on [the organisation's] stand. I attended full staff meetings, a board of trustees meeting, shadowed peer supervision, and meetings with partners and other external organisations, giving me an insight into how an organisation like [the organisation] is managed and run daily. <i>Research:</i> During my placement, I was responsible for a Client Stories research project, supported by the office manager – a project designed to carry out qualitative research to centre the experiences of [the organisation's] clients. I carried out interviews with 11 clients across their counselling, help, support, and advocacy, helpline, family pride, and domestic abuse and sexual violence (Safer Rainbow) services. This has created a resource of client case studies or testimonials which can be used for grant applications, funding reports, and annual reports that provides evidence of the impact that [the organisation] has on clients across the Southwest to help secure future funding. I also created an illustrated client stories research booklet to be shared with all [the organisation's] staff, trustees, and external collaborators or partnership organisations to exemplify the impact of [the organisation's] work.



Did the placement meet your original objectives and expectations? What were the tangible outputs or outcomes? Where there any unexpected outcomes or opportunities arising from the placement?

Yes, my placement met, and exceeded, my original objectives and expectations. Meeting the management team a couple of times prior to the start of my placement allowed us to explore expectations for all involved and develop a well-thought-out but flexible plan. The team at [the organisation] welcomed me into their team and were so generous with their knowledge and time, involving me in all aspects of their work and giving me the opportunity to experience [the organisation] fully.

As outlined above, I created a resource of client case studies or testimonials which can be used for grant applications, funding reports, and annual reports, that provides evidence of the impact that [the organisation] has on clients across the Southwest to help secure future funding and collaborations. I also created an illustrated client stories resource booklet to be shared with all [of the organisation's] staff, trustees, and external collaborators or partnership organisations to exemplify the impact of [the organisation's] work.

Through both the client stories research project and shadowing one-to-one client meetings with LGBT+ practitioners I gained an insight into the range of challenges experienced by the LGBT+ community and the ways in which clients are supported. The client stories project enabled me to develop my qualitative research skills, and practice building rapport and trust with clients, both benefiting me as an academic researcher and my professional development. This was also an opportunity to think about data presentation for a non-academic audience and how to communicate ideas with impact in mind.



How has the placement developed your insight into working with non-academic partners and the benefits and/or challenges of collaboration?

My placement with [the organisation] provided the opportunity to experience potential careers outside of academia and demonstrated how research skills developed within academic can be applied in alternative spaces, specifically in the LGBTQ+ charity sector. My placement demonstrated how qualitative research can be used to centre the voices of clients, to further the incredible work that an LGBT+ organisation like [the organisation] do and how researchers can facilitate grant applications, funding reports, and collaboration, as well as provide feedback to staff members and trustees.

Shadowing both the management team and team members on a variety of help, support, and advocacy projects gave me an insight into how a charity organisation like [the organisation] is managed and run daily, including finance and funding; how a local organisation like [the organisation] collaborates with other support charities as part of a national network working to improve LGBT+ lives and rights; and experience the type of work being done to support LGBT+ communities under a variety of services. This provided an understanding of how academic partners or researchers could contribute to this work.

Has the experience of doing the placement made you think about the potential or the impact of your research differently? If so, how?

My PhD research centres on queer lives and biography, exploring how queer lives are written about in queer books, and the importance of queer books and queer life writing for LGBTQ+ representation and education. Developing the client stories project for [the organisation], interviewing clients about their experiences of using their services and creating a resource that resembles the collective biographies studied in my PhD research has expanded my understanding of the importance and potential of queer lives, queer voices, and biography. It has highlighted the possibilities of biography as a methodological approach which can have an impact and provides potential further research avenues.

Are there opportunities for further collaboration with the organisation either for yourself, or for other students, in the future?

I hope to continue my work with [the organisation] on a voluntary basis, either continuing and expanding the client stories research project, perhaps exploring [the organisation's] work with professionals, or in community engagement work like working at Pride events or supporting social or family pride groups.

What advice would you give to a fellow student who is considering undertaking a placement?

Doing a placement as part of your PhD is a valuable opportunity to explore the possibilities of your research interests outside of academia whilst exploring how non-academic collaboration can enrich your research. Approach your placement both with an open mind and flexibility but with a clear idea of how you can contribute to your placement organisation and the ways in which your placement organisation can help you as an academic researcher or in your professional development.



Would you be willing to mentor or support other students thinking about undertaking a placement?

YES ☐ NO ☒

Would you be willing to take part in a full case study based on your placement?

YES ☒ NO ☐

Placement Organisation Feedback

Please provide any feedback regarding the placement student and their contribution to your organisation. How did they 'make a difference'? Did any new ways of working or collaborating emerge from hosting this placement student?

We were extremely happy with the placement of [the student] within our organisation. [The student] was enthusiastic to be placed at [the organisation] and was keen to support the work we do in whatever way we needed. [The student] was able to fit easily into the team, and she worked hard to better understand how a charity like ours worked with clients, external agencies and other professionals. In return, [the student] worked on a project for us that involved interviewing our clients and creating a resource which helped us to measure a client's experience of our services. She approached this project with sensitivity and a respect for our client group and their stories. We were delighted with the work she did whilst she was on placement with us, and the finished project is one that exceeded our expectations. The finished resource showed us what can be achieved when you work closely with a placement on a specific task.

[The student] was able to provide us with a resource which we know will be a great help when applying for future funding and will help us evidence the value of our services and the work we do with the individuals we support. It was [the student's] attitude and commitment to the work we do, that made the placement such a success.

Would you consider taking on another placement student? YES ☒ NO ☐

Academic Supervisor Feedback

Please provide any feedback regarding the student's placement and how their learning & development and their collaborative objectives, have been fulfilled.

I am absolutely delighted with how well [the student's] placement at [the organisation] has gone. It was always an ideal organisation for [the student] to work in given the strong alignment between the focus on LGBTQ+ lives in her PhD research and the mission of [the organisation], but the clear support from the organisation as well as [the student's] own drive and initiative have made this an incredibly rewarding experience for all involved.

[The student] has been able to dive into the heart of working at [the organisation] and received a 360 degree understanding of the organisation through shadowing. It's excellent to see that staff there involved [the student] in all aspects of their work and really made sure that she felt part of the team.



In addition, the research project that [the student] led while she was on her placement has helped to consolidate her existing research skills as well as develop new ones, particularly in terms of writing for non-academic audiences. It's fantastic to see that [the student's] work on this is already having real impact.

Overall, this placement has not just met all of [the student's] learning & development and collaborative objectives but has exceeded them. I want to congratulate [the student] on getting so involved in the work and team at [the organisation], to thank [the organisation] for providing such meaningful support and genuine opportunities for [the student's] career and learning development, and also to thank the SWDTP for facilitating and funding such a positive placement.