

## Making the most of the Graduate Management programme

**Daniel Little graduated from Skills for Care's Graduate Management programme in January 2019, one of many ambitious and driven graduates looking for a career in health and social care. He talks about his experience and how you should make the most of the connections you make.**

Everyone on the programme will have a unique experience with their cohort, and everyone will be looking for something different. I wasn't sure what to expect from the other graduates, but now that my placement is over, I can look back at my time and safely say I was not disappointed and valued their company.

They've provided many laughs along the way, and I've made some strong friendships. It's a strange relationship only seeing each other once a month, then having to spend all day in a professional setting. You discuss your work and the big issues surrounding the health and wellbeing of the nation, and then you go out for several pints in London. This social time is a necessity of networking and building bonds that can support you during this journey. Honestly, it's not all about the drinking!



Sometimes, you've got a great idea that you think is going to be the answer to the country's health and social care woes, sometimes you just fancy a rant about what's going on at your placement, and sometimes, and this is important: you just want to take your mind off work for a while. Your own health and wellbeing is a top priority.

The great thing about the programme is that it attracts so many varied people from all backgrounds and walks of life; there will be someone in your network suited to any mood you're in and to lift you when you're feeling down. I urge everyone to forge as many friendships as possible on this programme, because talking to someone else who's in the same situation has proven to be really helpful.

Naturally, some of you will get more out of your placement location than others. For me, it was easy to meet up with people based in and around London, but those from further afield, we only met on Skills for Care activity days. The important thing to remember is to make the network what you want it to be – these people are likely to all be very different to you with different strengths and ideas, which is great. Who knows, some of these people may be running health and social care services in the future and be in key government positions.

Leadership and management training will teach you that every connection is an opportunity to make a difference, and there will be fewer professional environments safer than your graduate programme to make these valuable contacts. Make the most of every opportunity, be sure to keep an open mind and who knows where the programme could take you – good luck everyone!