

Note from *people and places*: this volunteer's placement was designed specifically for them – they went through our full matching process, as we've been doing with you. The placement report indicates their particular skills and experience – yours may be similar or completely different – your own placement will make best use of **your** experience and skills. Every volunteer is different – in what they give and what they gain. Reports from previous volunteers serve to give you as good a picture as possible about the project. If you have any questions about any of the detail in this report please do not hesitate to contact me at kate@travel-peopleandplaces.co.uk

Jacky Slade: Good Work Foundation

1. **Placement dates and project:** 17 May 2018 – 3 July 2018

2. **Pre-departure preparation:** meeting Diane; studying website; YouTube material; (Paul's) contact with Ray (previous volunteer); face to face pre-course interviews with MBSR group prior to departure from UK.

3. Orientation and preparation at the start of the placement

This didn't really happen on arrival. People may have thought that Paul could meet most of my orientation needs. It was also very busy at GWF – people visiting, other activities. So, I think (and we have fed back to GWF) a more careful orientation, organisational structure, staff list and roles and locations; key organisational plans – would have been helpful.

Note: this will certainly be addressed by people and places & GWF

4. What did we do well?

Initial preparation and admin - fine. Reassurance re contribution – fine

5. Your experience and work

- MBSR course delivered to 12 staff- well evaluated so far
- Mindfulness workshops and sessions for staff and interns
- 1:1 support time and reading support to some staff
- Child development and attachment theory workshops at the centres
- Review of mentoring scheme
- Jointly presented workshop on managing meetings

Docs produced for GWF:

- Mentoring review doc
- End of placement report

6. in your opinion, are there any significant changes needed in the information we sent to you during your preparation for this placement?

- I think P&P and GWF need to be aware of school holidays and closures and point out implications for volunteer arrival times and placement dates
- GWF could be more strategic about their needs and timing for volunteers – we think they may be reluctant to say 'no' but volunteers demand staff time and we have the impression there may be volunteer or intervention overload at times.

Note: we always do our best to find out about school holidays and closures before finalising any volunteer's placement, and will continue to work closely with our local partners to improve – we rely on their providing accurate information

7. Your recommendations for the input of future volunteers – a particular area of your work which could be continued by others and how would you suggest this could be done?

- Continued support with mindfulness – possibly another course for staff (possibly not MBSR – I'd be happy to discuss reasons with anyone contemplating this) and/ or a Mindfulness for Leader's course for EXCO as it grows to meet the needs of expansion.

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- More in-put on theory of child development, attachment and trauma for facilitators and coordinators
- The mentoring scheme will certainly benefit from additional support as there needs to be consistency across the campuses.

8. Successes and disappointments of your placement

Staff are very present for the children at GWF. It is wonderful to see this and to build upon it and extend it. To deliver the MBSR in this context was a highlight – such a privilege and so much learning for me. I am delighted that staff were supported by this intervention and hope they will be able to keep up their practice. Disappointments - not so much disappointment as a comment – maybe staff need more help to prioritise their time. Even the MBSR was beset by other demands cutting across staff ability to attend. GWF know this.

9. What was the highlight of your volunteer experience? As above plus the relationships, friendships and the opportunity to work collaboratively with a highly motivated and lovely group of people. And the singing at Morning Circle is deeply affecting.

10. Would you recommend volunteering to other people or not? Yes – enriching, challenging of knowledge and perspectives. And great to offer some small measure of support to an important social development. In this context, an awareness of the complexity of the country is important and it requires some self-sufficiency, flexibility, patience and sensitivity.

11. How did you spend your leisure time?

- We enjoyed time with Kate and Mo and other staff/ volunteers.
- We ate out occasionally in the week
- We travelled and played the tourist at weekends
- A car was essential. Volunteers need to be prepared for the somewhat claustrophobic nature of dark evenings and a certain limitation on what is possible in the week and how you get to places. A single volunteer may find it a bit isolated. Kate and Mo would do everything possible to support but they are busy people.

12. How was your accommodation?

Fine. Comfortable. No TV but we wouldn't have used it anyway as not part of our life at home!



24 July 2018

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Thank you.