

Example Personal Statement for Social Work

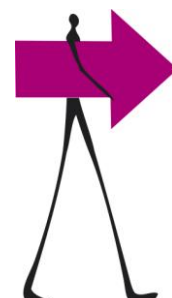
My commitment and motivation to study for the MA in Social Work is fairly recent and as a direct result of the experiences I have gained in social work and related settings in the past 2 years. To explain, the first two summer vacations of my undergraduate studies I obtained a voluntary role as a sessional worker for the social services department in Gateshead and Durham. This involved mentoring and befriending adolescent young mothers in care and adolescents who had become involved in crime. In addition, by speaking in-depth to qualified social workers, including managers, these experiences provided me with a valuable insight into the aims, values and ethics of social work within the local authority and how these are applied in practice.

I had briefly studied social work ethics and values whilst studying modules in social policy and deviance as part of my degree in Sociology and was genuinely enthused in particular by the values of a non-judgemental approach to people and a positive belief in the ability of all clients to gain self-empowerment through effective social work interventions. This made me curious about the profession of social work and led to my pursuing relevant work experience.

Through applying these values and ethics in my voluntary role I not only gained a great sense of job satisfaction I also came to realise how important these are to gaining respect and trust from clients, a necessity as a foundation for any client work in social services to be effective. I was able to gain an insight and practical experience myself of the challenges of working with clients in a social work setting. My ability to demonstrate personal qualities of diplomacy, tact and empathy in these situations have further convinced me of my suitability to pursue the profession via MA study.

I fully appreciate additional challenges social workers face in relation to working to modern strict procedures, having discussed this with qualified social workers and managers – this, I understand requires the ability to take a multi-agency approach and skills to multi-task, plan and work concisely and accurate. All these skills I have gained not only from academic study and relevant work experience. In addition, I have been involved in a position of responsibility in my college as welfare rep to all students, developing strong skills of listening and advocacy, specifically being successful in helping a range of students with differing needs to access university resources and external services to aid in empowering them to make positive self change.

In terms of applying to Durham University I am particularly impressed by the research within the social work department. I take a strong interest in wanting to work with adolescents in the future and am impressed by the recent research carried out by Professor Lena Dominelli into supporting young mothers with more effective interventions. I am enthused to discover the impact this research will have in influencing positive change with current policies towards interventions in the future. I aim to focus my



dissertation for my MA in this area, with the hope that I will be able to use some of my findings to make applications in practice when I fully qualify. Having the support of a leading researcher in a subject area I am passionate about will be a key motivating force in working to my full potential on the MA.

Finally I aim to stay long term in Durham and am impressed by the strong links the department has with local social services providers for providing work placements and the opportunity to apply for social worker roles on completion of the MA. The success rate of recent graduates from the course in securing trainee positions in the Northeast is particularly impressive.

