

Matthew's Intern Story

Fab in the Lab!

North Tees Hospital - Stockton

Matthew has a range of health difficulties including chromosome deletion at position 2p16.3 with NRNX1 and has a diagnosis of Development Coordination Disorder. Matthew also suffers from anxiety and needs time to build up trusting safe relationships and feel comfortable in the learning environment. This is something Matthew really struggled with during his time at school and college, and he was very worried about his chances of obtaining paid employment due to his low confidence and lack of experience.

Matthew is on placement within the Histology lab at North Tees Hospital. In this department they are responsible for the microscopic identification and study of diseased tissue which is extremely important for accurate and timely diagnosis in the cancer treatment pathway.



Before Matthew started placement, his mentor was given awareness training bespoke to Matthew's background and needs, so that she knew what to expect and could prepare appropriate tasks and environment for him – taking into consideration his physical mobility limitations and his anxiety.

Despite Matthew's medical issues, he really wanted to try to independently travel to his placement in order to build up confidence and prepare for adulthood. Matthew needed to get two buses and walk in order to get to placement, and did not let his anxiety get in the way of achieving his goal.

Matthew has impressed his mentors with his commitment to learning and the skills he has gained, so much so that they encouraged him to apply for a bank position in the department – and Matthew was successful! This type of employment will allow him to pick up paid shifts as and when he can around his own schedule and at a pace that he can continue to learn the job without overwhelming him and causing further anxiety.

Matthew says; 'I am really enjoying my placement; the staff are lovely, and I work well with them. I know my limitations of what I can do, and the staff accept this of me, and I feel very comfortable. If I need a break or I cannot do something, then it is not an issue. I am picking things up and the staff show me how to do the tasks and I work with someone when I am doing the data entry.'

I am looking forward to working longer days this term so that I can see other things happening in the department'

Matthews mentor tells us; 'Matthew has had no issues settling into the lab and we look forward to him being in with us and is a pleasure. Over the first term Matthew has done so well so far with the tasks that he is involved with. He can independently do the Discard tasks without any support and is able to identify if something is there that shouldn't be. He is involved with block filing and is able to sort through to prioritise work. He is being shadowed on data entry as this is quite complex and is picking this up well'

Matthew's coordinator Sharon says; 'Matthew enjoys the structure and routine of the tasks that he completes, as this helps with his anxieties as he knows what there is to do. Matthew has shown great determination to get to placement even though the journey is difficult – 2 buses, length of journey, the pain caused to the travelling and now we have organised a taxi for him through Access to work – he is now in less pain and is able to do longer hours in his second term. I have seen Matthew's confidence grow and the support of the team he is working with has helped with this. Matthew is staying at his placement for a second term, and I look forward to seeing his skills develop in a positive way. Well done, Matthew'.

Matthew is a true testament to how a supportive mentor and learning environment can make all the difference towards an individual's confidence to access employment.