

ForthSector

Forth Sector's recruitment process encourages and enables people recovering from mental ill health to take up paid employment both within and outwith Forth Sector

Address: SPACE
11 Harewood Road
Edinburgh
EH16 4NT

Web address: www.forthsector.org.uk

General Enquiries: 0131 659 4710

Experience of a Forth Sector staff member who has personal experience of mental health problems.

How did you first hear about Forth Sector?

Via Restart

What did you do in the past?

I worked at SCVO on a temporary contract. Before this I was at university twice (I did not complete my degrees but achieved a qualification), worked in a financial company for a short while, and volunteered extensively before finding my current role. I became mentally ill and had to leave my studying and work twice. I was unemployed and seeking work for quite a while.

What appealed to you about Forth Sector?

I was informed about Restart through Careers Scotland and it has really helped me immensely. My job here

came through Restart and the salary was great, much more than my temporary NDDP wage at SCVO! It was a step up the career ladder helping people and gaining new skills.

How were you feeling at the time?

I was desperate for a job and I was really nervous. I just hoped this one would work out. Luckily it did!

How did you feel coming here on your first day?

I felt nervous, but happy to meet everyone. I was visiting the Forth Sector Social Firms all around Edinburgh on my own which was a bit nerve wracking!! I was excited as well.

Social Firms seek to create good quality jobs for severely disadvantaged people within supportive and successful enterprises

For more information on Social Firms and how to join us please go to our website or get in touch by email sfs@socialfirms.org.uk or call us on 0131 225 4178.

www.socialfirms.org.uk

How did you feel at the end of your first day?

Happy and proud of myself.

What kind of things did the staff at Forth Sector say and do to help?

They were very friendly, approachable and helpful with my questions.

Did anything happen that didn't help?

Probably getting lost when finding Six Mary's Place Guest House, one of the Social Firms.

Was there was anyone else that helped you?

Yes I called my manager then and she sent a colleague to point out the guest house for me. Also I found it by asking a local shopkeeper.

What kind of tasks did you get involved in?

I had an induction to get an overall view of Forth Sector so on my first day I got involved helping with each of the businesses work with trainees and staff – it was great. At the Wood Works I had a great tour and explanation of the new business from Simon (the manager) and got to drive around with him in his new truck which was fun! I had a good introduction to my work tasks from a very helpful colleague when I was back in the office too.

How many hours a week did you start off doing?

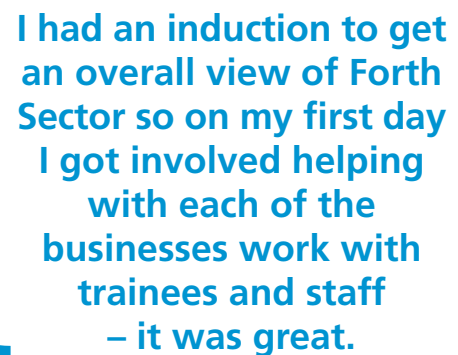
Full time – 36.25 (9-5 Mon-Fri)

Did you do anything in your spare time?

I tried to relax and chatted to family and friends. Went to the cinema/shopping and played on the computer a bit.



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What happened next?

I stayed in my current job for a year and a month. I now have a new position, which I start in just over a week.

What were your worries?

Not being good enough, making mistakes, not knowing enough.

What were you looking forward to?

Pay day! Completing my probation period and staying in employment.

Did anyone else help you?

Yes very much so, Mum, dad, sister and best friend. They listened to me all throughout my time, even when things were tough. Listened and reassured me.

Was anything difficult?

Pressure and sometimes not being supported when I needed it – having to support myself and be independent. Just learning to support myself as someone without a mental health problem does normally. Watching I did not get ill again – taking care of myself.

Have you developed since then?

Yes I feel I have. Although I acknowledge that is not something one can 'get over' and that it can recur at any time.

Gave me an excellent professional opportunity and a friendly place to work.

What has helped you to develop?

Being treated as a 'normal' capable individual in a job.

What has been difficult about this?

Supporting myself and travelling a long distance to and from work – two buses each way is very tiring, especially at the end of the day when you are feeling emotionally drained.

What obstacles have there been?

Fear, sometimes not enough support, things going wrong and having to 'fire fight' –my nature is very reactive though.

How did you get over them?

I grew in confidence and independence and supported myself and my team which boosted my confidence and morale too.

How did Forth Sector help you to do this?

Gave me an excellent professional opportunity and a friendly place to work.

What didn't they do?

Reduce my stress levels when the department is incredibly busy. Perhaps more administrative support would have been better too, as I have to do a lot of things myself.

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Forth Sector is a social enterprise. It operates small, commercial, supportive businesses (Social Firms) to provide employment opportunities for people with mental health problems.

People whose mental health is a barrier to them gaining open employment can attend as a trainee, joining for up to 16 hours per week. By joining one of the Social Firms trainees benefit from practical experience in a supportive realistic working environment. This can help people to recover from the impact of their mental ill health, increase their employability and to regain or retain employment. There is no time limit on how long trainees can attend for.

As well as the trainee placements within the Social Firms Forth Sector are also piloting a project called Workspace. A Workspace trainee is someone who is already involved in some activities throughout the week and is ready to work towards gaining employment in the next nine months. A Workspace trainee gets a placement within the Forth Sector office or in one of the Social Firms which provides real working experience. The group also comes together once a week for training in areas such as IT skills, customer service, team working, assertiveness, confidence, interview skills, CV building etc.

For Workspace and Social Firm trainee vacancies please call the training and development team on 0131 659 4710.

Email: alison.stocks@forthsector.org.uk