

THE GATEWAY TO EMPLOYMENT

Module code BMLC5005

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Placement hours log

In this section please record your placement hours, including dates and the amount of hours completed on each day. Please note that this should also be signed by your placement provider to confirm that the recorded hours are correct.

<u>Date</u>	<u>Hours completed</u>
12/11/25	1 hour interview
23/11/25	5-930pm
30/11/25	6-930pm
7/12/25	5-930pm
14/12/25	6-930pm
21/12/25	5-930pm
28/12/25	5-930pm
04/01/26	6-930pm
11/01/26	5-930pm
18/01/26	6-930pm
25/01/26	5-930pm
01/02/26	6-930pm
08/02/26	5-930pm
15/02/26	6-930pm
22/02/26	5-930pm
01/03/26	6-930pm
08/03/26	5-930pm
15/03/26	6-930pm
22/03/26	5-930pm
29/03/26	6-930pm
5/04/26	5-930pm
12/04/26	6-930pm
19/04/26	5-930pm
26/04/26	6-930pm
8/05/26	6-920pm

<u>Confirmation of hours completed</u>	
Placement provider signature;	
Date signed;	14/5/2026

First 40 hours; A Reflection

In this section, you are to reflect on the first 40 hours of your placement. You are to utilise the Gibbs Reflective cycle in order to do so. The word count for this section is 750 words.

The Gibbs Reflective cycle is a model created by a number of different stages which was created by Gibbs to prompt more extensive reflections by disconnecting emotions and purposefully decelerating the thought process. By doing this, will allow people to have a structured and clear thought process, (Gibbs, 1988). The cycle contains six crucial stages; Description, Feelings, Evaluation, Analysis, Conclusion and Action plan, (University of Cumbria, 2020). To evaluate my first 40 hours of my placement, I will be utilising this model in order to create a structured reflection.

My placement was carried out at Matts cafe. Globally, enormous amounts of perfectly usable food are wasted. In the UK alone, a substantial proportion of the population is known to be malnourished, making the demand and reliance on food banks higher than ever. Matt's cafe takes such food items and creates meals to feed those in need on a pay as you feel basis, (Matthews House, 2026).

During my first 40 hours of volunteering at Matt's Café, I was introduced to the role through a set of paper-based training instructions that outlined the expectations and procedures of the cafe. On my first shift, I was paired with an experienced volunteer and assigned to dishwashing, which provided a helpful and manageable introduction to the environment. This allowed me to become familiar with the pace of the café and how the team worked together. As I grew more confident, I began working in the main restaurant area, where I gained experience cleaning tables, serving food, and providing hot drinks to customers. After spending a few shifts developing these skills, I was then shown how to use the iPads to take customer orders, marking a progression in my responsibilities and confidence within the role.

At the beginning of my volunteering experience at Matt's cafe, I did feel slightly nervous due to being in a completely new environment than I was accustomed to. Working in a restaurant was unfamiliar to me as I currently work in retail and have done this for the past five years. However, starting with dishwashing was a helpful introduction to me, as it allowed me to ease into the role and gradually become more comfortable and feel at ease, especially once I got to know some of the other volunteers. As my confidence grew, I was then introduced to the main cafe area, which I found really exciting because it involved more interaction with guests and responsibility. All the volunteers are welcoming, helpful and incredibly supportive which made the experience even more enjoyable. Learning how to take orders on the Ipad has been my favourite role as it has allowed me to engage with customers more which made me feel both proud and happy with my contributions.

Evaluating my first forty hours at Matthew's house, I initially found the fast paced environment of a restaurant slightly challenging as I was focused on avoiding making mistakes when delivering food. At first, I made slightly small mistakes such as taking food to the wrong tables while trying to learn the table numbers and food orders. I quickly became able to navigate myself around the cafe and learn the organisation of tables. Using the iPads was something I adapted to quickly, as I was already familiar with technology from my job in retail, which made this aspect of the role feel more natural. Although I made a few minor mistakes at the beginning, such as adding three sugars in a cup of tea, instead of two, I responded appropriately by informing the kitchen straight away so the error could be corrected. This showed my ability to take responsibility and communicate effectively. By the end of my first shift using the iPads, I felt comfortable and capable, demonstrating clear progress in my confidence and competence within the role.

Following this, is the analysis stage of the Gibbs reflective cycle. In this stage, I considered why I initially struggled within the fast paced restaurant environment. My lack of prior experience in hospitality meant I was more focused on avoiding mistakes than working efficiently, which increased my anxiety and slowed my performance at first. However, as I became more familiar with the routine, my confidence improved, allowing me to work more effectively. This shows how experience can reduce uncertainty and improve performance. In contrast, I adapted quickly to using the iPads, likely due to my previous experience with technology in retail, which highlights how transferable skills can positively influence performance in new roles. The small mistakes I made, such as inputting incorrect orders, were allowing me to gain new learning experiences and my ability to communicate these errors to the kitchen demonstrated responsibility and effective team work. Overall, this stage highlights that both prior experience and a supportive environment contributed to my development, while initial challenges were overcome through practice and adaptation.

To conclude my first 40 hours at Matthew's House, my experience at Matt's cafe has helped me to develop my confidence in trying new experiences. I have learned that, although I was initially nervous due to my lack of experience in hospitality, I was able to overcome this with practice and support from other volunteers. I also recognised that my previous experience in retail gave me useful transferable skills, particularly when using technology such as the iPads for taking orders. During my next 40 hours, I would try to be more confident from the beginning when trying new skills and focus less on the fear of making mistakes, as I now understand that errors are a natural part of learning.

The final step of the reflective cycle is the Action plan stage which entails which I will do differently when conducting my next forty hours of volunteering. During my next forty hours of volunteering, I would aim to approach new learning opportunities and unfamiliar tasks with confidence from the beginning as I am now more aware of how making errors are needed to succeed. Overall, I am excited to continue with my next forty hours and plan to tackle new opportunities in different roles.

Overall reflection

In this section, using the Gibbs Reflective Cycle you are to reflect on your placement after it has been completed. It is important to ensure that this reflection is not a direct copy of the one in the previous section. But it is understandable and acceptable for you to mention/discuss some of the same elements. The word count for this section is 750 words.

The Gibbs reflective cycle assesses the positives and negatives of an event or circumstance by allowing a person to evaluate what can be improved and what went well thoroughly. As stated by, Alias, Aris and Hashim, (2023). To assess the overall placement, I will continue to use this.

Firstly, is a description of my overall experience. During my time at Matthew's House, I developed a lot of confidence and even built connections with the guests who accessed the service. Frequently, I began to be recognised by some of the regular guests who came in every week. This was particularly rewarding as it allowed me to create a more welcoming and familiar environment for the guests. As well as, I enjoyed speaking with the same guests and this also assisted in ensuring they felt both welcomed and valued. I would describe this as one of my favourite and most rewarding elements of Matthew's House. I also experienced different roles within the cafe following my first 40 hours. For instance, I spent time on the door, welcoming guests and leading them to their tables. Following this, I also trailed a shift in the kitchen making all the hot drinks for guests. While I did enjoy these roles, I found that I preferred working in the main guest area, serving guests directly. This is where I had the most interaction with guests and I found this most enjoyable. There are several new skills that I learnt during my placement. Mainly, my team working skills when working with a new team. Since I have been working in retail for the past five years, I have previously gained team working skills. However, this only applies to a team that I was familiar with. Learning how to work with a team which I was unfamiliar with was a new challenge for me; Despite this, the volunteers were extremely helpful and attentive with their roles which made it easy to adapt to work with a new team.

Overall, my experience at Matthews house has had a very positive impact on how I felt both personally and professionally. At the beginning, I felt slightly nervous about entering a new environment and working with unfamiliar people; however, this quickly shifted to a sense of comfort and belonging as I became more involved and confident. Building relationships with regular guests made me feel valued and gave me a sense of purpose, as I could see the impact of creating a welcoming and supportive environment. I also felt a strong sense of fulfilment and satisfaction when interacting with guests, particularly when they recognised me and engaged in conversation.

Using the Gibbs reflective cycle, the next element is evaluation to assess what went well and what could be improved. Overall, my experience at Matthew's House was highly positive;

however, there were both strengths and areas for development. One massive strength of this placement would be my ability to adapt to new surroundings. I was also able to adapt to a new team environment, demonstrating flexibility and effective collaboration with unfamiliar individuals. Another key element of my placement was my ability to build meaningful relationships with guests and support those in need. However, one limitation of my placement was my lack of confidence at the beginning of my placement. This was a limitation at first as I had never experienced a restaurant environment before. However, the supportive nature of the volunteers helped to minimise initial challenges, allowing me to develop confidence over time. Next time, I would display more confidence from the offset as I found that as my confidence grew, I also became more confident at trying new tasks. Overall, the strengths of the placement outweighed the limitations, and the experience contributed significantly to my personal and professional development.

As for the action plan and conclusion section of the Gibbs cycle, as of now, I am still currently volunteering at Matthews house. My volunteering placement has been partially rewarding to be a part of. Matthews house succeeds greatly at supporting people in need and creating a welcoming environment. Overall, the experience was not only educational but rewarding to be a part of which is why I will be continuing this.

Specific questions

In this section you are to answer the following questions. Please note that the word count for these questions overall is 500 words, it is your choice how many words you afford to each question.

1. Explain a situation during your placement where you demonstrated resilience.

During my placement, there are several situations in which I have demonstrated resilience. For instance, I demonstrated this while supporting individuals that may become irritated. Individuals sometimes became frustrated due to the waiting period of being served during busy periods. As well as, one particular situation where the microwaves in the kitchen had stopped working which created a hold on orders coming out. To combat this, I make sure to remain considerate and reassure guests that their orders would be arriving shortly and offer extra hot drinks to satisfy them while they wait. I also engaged in conversation to distract the guests and keep them entertained while the orders were being prepared. These recurring experiences demonstrated resilience by showing I can remain composure under pressure and continue to support others during busy times.

2. Explain a situation during your placement where you were required to be honest and open.

During my placement at Matthews House, I was required to be open and honest in many situations; such as, needing additional training with certain tasks such as working in the main cafe area when I was unsure of my task. Another instance would be when guests asked me for information about additional services offered at Matthews house such as showers and help with housing, etc. Instead of giving guests misleading and potentially incorrect information, I instead informed the guests that I was unsure about the other services. To assist the guests, I spoke to the shift leader who provided me with multiple leaflets about the other services which were offered which I could give to the guest. Being open in this situation helped to build trust, as the service user appreciated the honesty rather than being misled. It also ensured that the information provided was reliable and appropriate.

3. How did you demonstrate professionalism during your placement ?

I demonstrated professionalism during my placement in several ways. When working with individuals, I approached this with a respectful, compassionate and non-judgemental approach. I made sure to treat all guests with dignity, ensuring all

individuals feel welcome and valued, regardless of their outside circumstances. This is a key example of professionalism within a community where individuals may be vulnerable. My communication skills also reflected professionalism as I assured to always remain patient and attentive; This is essential when working with individuals with complex needs and creates a comfortable and enjoyable environment for the guests.

Reference list

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