



NATIONAL TRAINEESHIP FAQs

Q

I have supported friends and family members with their substance use, but never had any issue with this personally, can I still apply?

A

Whilst SDF recognise the huge value and experience you have supporting a friend or family member, our National Traineeship applicants must have their own personal lived or living experience to apply. Organisations such as Scottish Families Affected by Drugs and Alcohol could prove to be a useful service to gain experience for your professional development, as well as SDF's free suite of training and e-learning.

Q

If I do have personal lived experience, what might be some of the reasons that my application isn't successful?

A

We may decide the programme isn't suitable for you if we believe you can already progress without it—for example, if you are already employed and face no barriers entering the health and social care sector. You may also be ineligible if you already hold the same qualification level or if we feel you are not yet at the stage where you would be ready to support others.

Q

I currently work in the health and social care sector, but I want to work in substance use services, can I still apply?

A

We recommend considering some Continual Professional Development, allowing you to take your transferrable skills and knowledge into drug and alcohol services, rather than applying for the National Traineeship. A Professional Development Award, in combination with SDF's free suite of e-learning or signing up for some of our training could help with that!

Q

I am currently living in supported accommodation and receive a support package. Should I still apply?

A

SDF would highly recommend you speak to a specialist benefit advisor before applying for the National Traineeship. Everyone's circumstances are different; however, in our experience if you live in supported accommodation, it is highly likely that you will be financially worse off. We would recommend applying when your circumstances change.

Q

I've been volunteering at a local service to me, if I'm offered a place on the project can I do my placement there?

A

SDF's Project Support Team collaborates with placements across Scotland and will explore practical options for your placement during the traineeship. They'll work with you to find a placement that best suits your needs.



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I'm worried I'll be worse off financially if I do the National Traineeship. What benefits can I still get whilst doing the project?

A

SDF would always recommend speaking to a specialist benefit advisor such as a local advocacy service or Citizen's Advice, before applying for this role. Many people's in-work benefit situation is personal to their own circumstances, and we would never recommend anyone to apply if they or their dependents would be financially worse off. Trainees are paid the real Living Wage of £12.60 an hour and work 27.5 hours week. The [Turn2Us benefit calculator](#) can help show the workplace benefits you could still receive whilst doing the traineeship.

Q

I'm worried about discussing my convictions with an employer, what support will I receive to do this?

A

A lot of people we recruit to the traineeship have convictions and we are very used to discussing these – we do this sensitively, but openly. This takes place after we offer you a place on the programme, and we offer support to apply to become a member of the PVG Scheme. This is managed by Disclosure Scotland, who are responsible for assessing the suitability of people to work in social care, based on their convictions. We understand that it can be difficult to talk about any convictions you might have, but we are here to support you and provide advice to help you move forward.

Q

I feel uncomfortable working in certain services, can I request not go to certain services, or areas of my city/town?

A

Yes - before starting the programme, we discuss suitable placement options with you. We work with you to make sure your placement area is safe and suitable, helping you get the most out of your experience.

Q

If I am successful gaining a place on the traineeship, what can I do to prepare?

A

Make sure you have a strong support network for advice and encouragement, helping you manage your wellbeing and prepare to support others. You may also consider volunteering to build confidence in working with people and understanding different support needs. Brushing up on your IT skills—such as using Word and email—can also help, and free support is available through your local Adult Learning Team.