Likewise

Placement Student

Information Pack

Placement options 2 and 3



Placement Student Information Pack

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Who are we?

Likewise is a small charity in Camden with a long history of supporting people across the community and promoting social inclusion. We work with people from all backgrounds and circumstances to support wellbeing, community and independent living. We run:

- A Community Wellbeing Centre where any adult can come and be themselves, socialise, seek some emotional or practical support and engage in an array of wellbeing activities like walking, colouring-in, art therapy or baking.
- 1-to-1 floating support, where we work with adults on a
 1-to-1 basis to flexibly meet their needs. This can take place in people's homes, in the community or at our centre.

Our work is all about building mutual, authentic relationships – where we seek to understand a person in all of their wholeness and complexity, work alongside them to find out what support they might need or want, and work flexibly and holistically to make that happen.

We see ourselves as fundamentally being a learning organisation. People are complicated, mental health is complicated and that means our work is complicated. We don't think we have all the answers (in fact we know we don't have all the answers) but we do think we've learnt a lot about how we can work with the complicated, the messy, and the chaotic.

We understand that every individual is unique and therefore, as workers, we're constantly evolving and adding the necessary skills to our toolkit that mean we can work with difference, but also that we fundamentally see everyone as having far more in common than what makes them different.



Where do you fit in?

As a learning organisation we're keen to share our learning. We feel strongly about the people we work with, about broad, inclusive communities, promotion of wellbeing, and about what good care looks like – and this is something we want to share with the Health and Social Care sector and beyond. This is where you come in...

Our hope is that for each and every person that joins the Likewise team as part of our placement programme, you'll leave our organisation:

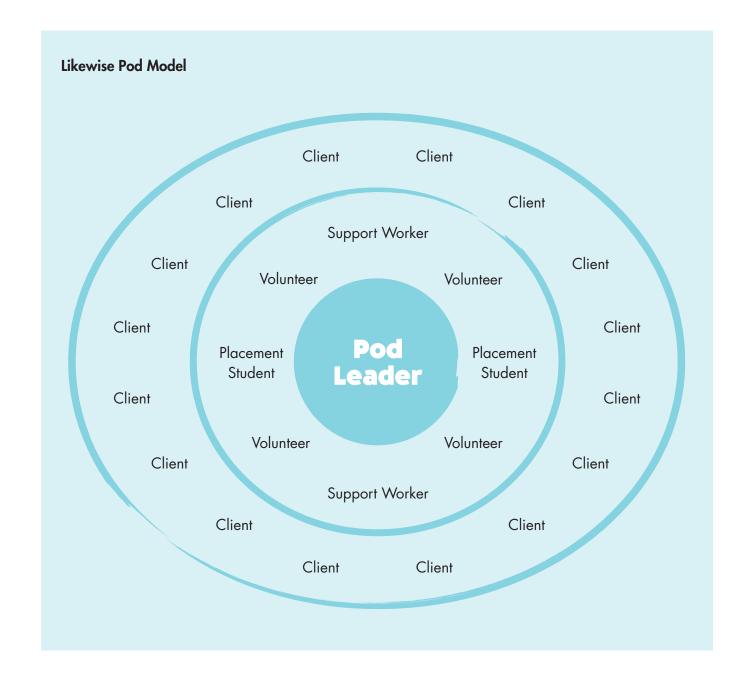
- With a better understanding of how to look after your own wellbeing
- Better positioned to support the wellbeing of others in your personal networks and community
- Equipped with the front-line experience, emotional intelligence and the skills needed to deliver high quality care, which can be taken into your careers in the Social Care, Health or Social Justice sectors.

We think the best way to learn is by doing – by being handson, front-line and experiencing the work for yourself. Whilst on a placement with us this is exactly what you'll be doing.

This is an opportunity to experience real-life working in the sector, and that means it's not an easy placement. Remember: people are complicated, mental health is complicated and that means what we do is complicated, so you'll need to be ready to step outside your comfort zone, to be open to learning, to be curious, prepared to work hard and be inquisitive. If you can bring all of that, we're ready to give you the experience and skills necessary to kick start your career.

What will your placement look like day-to-day?

Your placement will be just as varied and diverse as the people you'll be working with. In developing your timetable, we try to make sure that you get to experience all of the services we have on offer – so that you can be developing as many skills as possible. However probably the biggest part of your placement will be 1-to-1 working, which occurs within what we call the Pod Model.



At the centre of the Pod Model is a full-time member of staff – the 'Pod Leader' – who builds up a 'pod' of roughly 25 clients. Each of these clients will have varying packages of support, ranging from a couple of hours a week up to 8-10 hours, depending on their needs.

The Pod Leader works with each of these people themselves – undertaking the initial assessment, building a relationship and creating a support plan with them. The Pod Leader then gradually introduces different workers to the relationship, who will start to conduct some of the 1-to-1 visits. This is where you come in!

It's important to know that whilst you start doing some of the face-to-face visits, the Pod Leader still holds the core relationship between the client and the organisation – they keep in regular contact with the client, they're responsible for making any big decisions that need to be made and they also act as your supervisor. So whilst you will be lone working with people – you'll never be alone in needing to make decisions or knowing what to do, that's what the Pod Leader is there for.

On the next page is an example of a Placement Student timetable, which will hopefully give you a sense of what a week with us might look like. This timetable is 4 days per week, but you could be doing between 3 and 5 days depending on your university requirements and availability.



An example Placement Student timetable

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
9am				
	1-to-1 visit with Ahmed	Office time	Office time	
		Likewise	1-to-1 visit	
1pm	1-to-1 visit with Anthony	newsletter	with Maria	1-to-1 visit with Suki
2pm				
3pm				Action
4pm	Supervision	Leading a	Shadow assesment	Learning
5pm		Wellbeing Activity		
6pm				
7pm				Hub Session
8pm				



MONDAY

1-to-1 visit with Ahmed

Ahmed is a long-term mental health service user who has struggled with social isolation since he left hospital. You've been working with Ahmed to try and add some more structure to his day and get out of the house a bit more often, so usually you'll meet him at home and then you'll get out of the house together; sometimes for a walk, sometimes to the shops or sometimes to sit out at a café. Ahmed has decided that he'd like to meet some new people so that he can build up his social network and has asked if this is something you can help with.

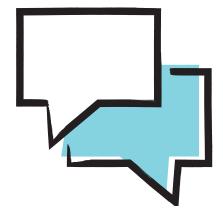
With the guidance of your Pod Leader, you and Ahmed looked into a number of different community groups together and decided upon joining a regular walking group at Hampstead Heath. He's been anxious about attending so today you've made a plan to go to the group together, with a view to helping him build up his confidence to attend alone in the future. Throughout this process you've been updating your Pod Leader and they've been giving you feedback and guidance, and they've also been in contact with Ahmed as well to make sure everything is going along okay.



1-to-1 visit with Anthony

After your walk at Hampstead Heath with Ahmed, you had a break and some time to travel to Camden Town to see Anthony. Anthony has lived in his council flat for many years, and during that time has accumulated a lot of stuff. He would describe himself as an avid collector, but more recently he's begun to feel that his collecting has gotten a bit out of control. As he's gotten older he's found it more difficult to do big tasks like moving things and he finds the idea of doing it really overwhelming and anxiety inducing. When he began working with Likewise, he made a plan with the Pod Leader to use a couple of hours a week to checkin, have a friendly chat and do some de-cluttering at home.

Today you've made a plan to go through Anthony's bookcase together. You're going to take everything out and sort things into piles of things he would like to keep, things he'd like to donate to charity and things he thinks should be thrown away. To support with Anthony's anxiety you've also developed some strategies together – like breathing exercises if he starts to feel overwhelmed.



Supervision

Every week you have supervision with your Pod Leader. There's a few purposes to supervision:

- To check in on the clients you'll pass on lots of information about how your clients are and what you've been doing with them, make plans for future actions with your Pod Leader and ensure you've passed on any worries if they exist.
- For your learning it's a space to ask questions, reflect, think critically about your own practice, think about your career, receive guidance and feedback.
- For your wellbeing a space for you to check in and ensure that you're feeling supported in your work. Whilst this is a dedicated time to do all this, curiosity, questioning and open reflection for us are some of the markers of a great practitioner so you're always encouraged to ask questions of other staff, do some reflection in the office between visits or share what's on your mind with whomever is nearby.



TUESDAY

Office time

In contrast to Monday, you're spending all day at the Likewise Hub in Swiss Cottage today. To start the day you're diving into some Office Time. For each of the client visits you did yesterday you need to make a written record of your visit, so that's going to be the first thing you do. It's a busy morning in the office so you've also answered a few phone calls and chatted to a few clients who've been in and out of the office asking for a bit of help here and there.

We love a good discussion/reflection in the office so you've also found yourself in a conversation with a couple of staff members who are talking through how best to support a particular client in the community space.

Likewise newsletter

You've also blocked out some time to work on the Likewise newsletter. Your Pod Leader got you involved with this after you said how much you loved being creative and had done some computer design before. You've developed some of the content yourself and there's also lots of content from clients; art work, poems, interviews. Your plan today is to start the design process by putting it all together.

Leading a Wellbeing Activity

Being a creative person, you had the idea of leading a clay workshop each week. In collaboration with another Placement Student, you've designed and advertised the class to anyone in the community and you've now got a regular group of 3-4 people who attend. The activity is a good opportunity for people to relax, do something they enjoy, try something new, break up their social isolation and have a friendly, supportive chat while they're at it.

WEDNESDAY

RS

1-to-1 visit with Maria

After a brief morning in the office where you helped the Evaluation Lead with some research, you're meeting your client Maria at her home in West Hampstead. Maria lives in supported accommodation and would like to live more independently and learn to better manage her own mental and physical health.

Maria has been referred to physiotherapy by her GP, but feels she needs some support to do this until she's built up the confidence and routine to attend independently. Today is her regular physiotherapy appointment, at a surgery near her home. You're planning to meet Maria at home and walk to the appointment together (or arrange alternate transport if weather is unsuitable). You've said that you'll go in with her and support her to make sure she understands the information the physiotherapist is giving. You're also going to write down her exercises together, as this is something Maria finds tricky to remember sometimes.

Shadow assessment

In the afternoon you join one of the other members of staff, who's asked you to come along to an assessment with a new client in their home. You're keen to find out how the assessment process works and hoping to get some tips from watching the staff member in action.



THURSDAY

1-to-1 visit with Suki

You've got a later start today because, when you gave your availabilities for the placement, you said you'd be happy to do some evening work – which tonight is the Thursday Hub Session. First, you have a two-hour visit with Suki. Suki is due to be re-assessed for her PIP benefits; that is money she receives to support her because of her mental illness and disability. Suki is understandably very anxious about this process; she has to fill in a complicated and lengthy form, she has to attend an assessment where she's asked lots of questions and she's worried that the money she needs to survive will be cut.

You've made a plan together, to fill in the form over the next 2 sessions. Suki doesn't feel able to write the answers to the questions herself, so you're writing, but you're conscious of doing this together as much as possible and not answering on her behalf. You read the questions together, make sure she understands what it's asking and then listen carefully to what she says, writing the answers using her own words. Suki finds the process really difficult and upsetting. You reassure her, allow her to express what she's feeling, and bring focus back to the questions when needed.

Action Learning

You then join a group with 5 or 6 of your fellow Placement Students who you've been working alongside on your placement. Action Learning is a regular space for you to be developing an array of skills, including your problem-solving and how to use open questions to explore a topic with someone else. It's also a great opportunity to have a bit of fun with your peers.

Evening Hub Session

You kick of the session with your usual team pre-session meeting. This is a meeting with other placement students, volunteers and staff who'll be running the Session – and you spend the first half an hour setting up the hall before sitting down and having a chat about things to follow up from the previous week, goals you'd like to set yourself for the Session and ask any questions you have before the clients arrive.



Throughout the night you spend time with a wide range of people accessing the Session – this looked like:

- Just sitting beside some people who didn't seem to want to chat, but you felt could use a friendly presence alongside them
- Having a social chat
- Providing some emotional support to someone in distress
- Playing a few games of pool
- Helping someone to do some photocopying

During the night you've also helped out with the preparation of dinner alongside a client who you encouraged to get involved (and got a free dinner, win!). At the end of night when the clients have left you sit back down as team to reflect on:

- How the clients were pass on concerns, ask questions, share mistakes
- Reflect on how you worked as a team as an individual

 What did you do well? What can you improve
 on? What would you like to do next week?
- Reflect on how you felt and whether this affected your practice –
 did you become anxious and avoid a client as a result? Were you
 really enjoying a chat and forgot to share your time with other
 clients? Did you become a bit impatient and snappy with a client?

This is a great space for learning – giving you plenty of opportunities for reflection, to ask questions and get feedback and guidance from the team.

Naming the elephant in the room: Covid-19

Coronavirus has had and is continuing to have a massive impact on our work. We're currently not running our group sessions or activities at the Hub and are doing quite a lot of remote (phone or video conference support) in lieu of face-to-face work. We don't know when we'll return to normal, or what the new normal will even look like, but it's not unlikely that your placement might be affected in some way. For example, you might not be leading a wellbeing activity or be in a group session initially until these services re-open, and you may be providing some remote support to clients from the Hub or even from home.

You will definitely be working face-to-face with clients on a 1-to-1 basis when you start and hopefully again with groups when it is safe to do so. We are of course taking every measure to ensure your work is safe; we have strict policy and procedures in place taking account of all relevant national and sector guidelines and are providing you with the training and materials (e.g. PPE) necessary to ensure you're confident in safe working practice.



Learning through doing

As you can see, this example timetable has you doing loads of different things and developing a vast array of different skills and, whilst we think that's where 95% of the learning happens – when you're actually there doing the work, front-line – you've also got loads of learning and support structures built into your timetable.

Supervision, Action Learning, Pre and Post-Session meetings and a culture of curiosity, openness and learning which means you can ask questions, share what's on your mind or seek guidance at any time.

When we surveyed students who were with us last year, they told us that during their time with us they'd developed their skills in:

- ✓ Understanding of mental health
- ✓ Communication
- ✓ Reflection
- Emotional Intelligence
- ✓ Self-awareness
- ✓ Understanding of physical health
- ✓ Teamwork
- ✓ Ability to support those with mental health needs
- Project management and planning
- ✓ Leadership
- ✓ Relationship building skills
- Managing challenging behavior
- Understanding of safeguarding and professional boundaries
- ✓ Dealing with conflict
- Ability to support those with physical health needs

Feedback from previous students

Here's some more feedback from previous students:



I think, because we are immersed in such a diverse community here, we sort of have the upper-hand in our learning just because, I think, a lot of people when they think of mental health, they think of it in a very textbook kind of way.



My placement was a 'petri dish for learning' – about emotions, about the sector, about myself, about EQ.



At the start if there was something that I was uncomfortable with I would be like okay and then step away, but now I find myself digging deeper and I feel more inquisitive and I feel more curious about where they have been. Mentally I feel stronger, more built up.



I do like that from the beginning you guys made it so open, like it's ok if you make mistakes because I think if you guys didn't make that prominent people will be a lot more afraid to do anything. I now have more knowledge about mental health and how it varies between each individual. I am more aware of the way in which I can help others not only those I know but others in the community.

I now work with people with emotional difficulties and my placement definitely helped me to better understand the personal side of these sorts of problems rather than the clinical or scientific side – this definitely has helped me when working and interacting with sufferers of psychiatric illness. It has also helped me to build resilience and learn to maintain the appropriate boundaries between myself and clients.

My supervision... it's kind of transformed the way I see people. And being a good listener, it has really helped to stepping back and thinking wow you wouldn't have realized how much someone has gone through and where they started and ended. It's a huge eye opener just to life in general.

Certain things just got me really anxious. So there was one visit in particular, her house was just in really bad condition. And the first shadow visit I went on with my Pod Leader, even she could tell that I was just like, it was like I was frozen – I didn't know what to do cause it was just like my worst nightmare. But, now I'm doing the visits and I'm completely fine. I think that's because of, number one it's the supervision and two, the support that you have alongside it.

Supporting you to transition into your career

We're conscious that for most of you we're going to be a stepping stone in your career. This ties in perfectly with our desire to share learning with the sector by creating graduates who are equipped with the front-line experience, emotional intelligence and the skills needed to deliver high quality care, which can be taken into your careers in the Social Care, Health or Social Justice sectors. Our hope is that, after a year with us, you'll be ready to hit the ground running in whatever career you choose.

This means giving you the experiences and learning necessary. It also means making your CV look great. Through our formal training offers, we hit both these birds with one stone.

Whilst you're with us, you'll undertake several formal training offers, recognised across the sector – free of cost. These include:

Mental Health First Aid – In this two-day course you will learn to recognise early signs of mental health problems and signs of worsening, existing, mental health problems, as well as how to respond appropriately to assist people in your community, family or workplace.

Like traditional first aid, Mental Health First Aid does not teach people to treat or diagnose mental health or substance use conditions. Instead, you will gain practical skills to offer initial support to someone experiencing a mental health problem, until appropriate professional help is received or the crisis resolves, while keeping yourself and the individual safe.

You will also be provided with local service information so that you can feel confident assisting someone to get the right support.

- ✓ Red Cross First Aid Traditional first aid, run by the Red Cross, which will prepare you to respond to an array of different physical health emergencies to keep both the person and yourself safe.
- ✓ The Care Certificate The nationalised induction for workers in the Social Care sector, which ensures your practise meets the national standards for high quality and safe care in the UK. Covering 15 module,s and delivered with a Likewise spin, this course will teach a wide array of skills and knowledge that will be essential to your work in the sector and leave you with nationally recognised certificate.

So slap that on your CV!

Of course, it goes without saying that as staff we're also here to answer any questions you have about working in the sector, provide advice and guidance where we can – and at the end of your placement, provide you with a reference outlining your work with us.



Your application

Okay, so you know our placements are awesome – how do you get one?

There are 3 steps to your application, which are outlined below. We have a monthly rolling recruitment process so you can apply at any time, there are no deadlines as such. However that doesn't mean you should apply in August for a September start for example, that's probably not going to happen.

Ideally you should complete all of these stages at least 3 months before your intended start date, but the early bird gets the worm so if you can get organised sooner, that's even better.



1. APPLICATION

The first step is to apply on our website: www.likewise.org.uk/learning-and-opportunities

You'll be asked to answer a series of questions about you, your placement requirements and why you'd like to undertake a placement with us. You'll also need to select a Selection Workshop (see step 3) date in your initial application.

Make sure you read all the questions carefully and provide as much information as possible where required. Communication and ability to follow instructions are some of the basics we'll look for in your application so I'll be honest, it's not a great look if you mess up at this point – not totally irredeemable – but better to double-check your application before you send it off.

2. INTERVIEW

You'll be asked to attend an interview, which has a few purposes:

- We'll want to know exactly what your placement requirements are, to make sure we can meet them. So it's super-important that you're clear on what exactly your university is asking of you.
- We'll want to get to know you a little bit what you're like as a
 person, what your motivations are for undertaking a placement
 with Likewise, what you're hoping to learn and generally,
 what your communication and inter-personal skills are like.
- You'll also have the opportunity to ask any questions you've got, because that's important too. And remember, we love curiosity.

You need to book this via the Eventbrite link on the website, and your interview date must be before the Selection Workshop date you choose in your application. Therefore it's worth checking there are still interview dates available, before you submit our application.

3. THE SELECTION WORKSHOP

This is kind of like a group interview – but hopefully wayyyy less scary. The workshop itself will involve a few different activities designed to get you thinking, applying our values to real-life scenarios, having some fun and discovering more about us along the way.

There's a couple of purposes to the selection process.

Firstly, we want you to choose us (or not choose us, that's fine too). You're all looking to make massive commitments to a placement experience – you're investing a lot of time into one place (for many of you this'll mean extending your degree by a year), you're not getting paid and you'll be investing a whole lot of physical and emotional energy into your placement. This means you've got to know what you're in for and choose that – if that's not us, that's absolutely fine, but we want you to be able to make a fully informed choice.

Secondly, we want to make sure you're the right fit for us. Now this isn't about what kind of previous experience or knowledge you have – in our work, we're people working with people, so we don't expect anyone to be an expert. We also see this as fundamentally being a learning experience, so you definitely don't need to be perfect.

You are working front-line with people though, and this means we have a responsibility to ensure that they're receiving high quality care. So, what we will be looking for is:

- Openness to learning are you curious, inquisitive, hungry to learn more, willing to unlearn?
- ✓ Are you willing to step outside your comfort zone? We've said so already but let's say it again, this is a hard placement. Being able to challenge yourself and step outside your comfort zone is a must.
- ✓ People skills are your communication and inter-personal skills at a good starting level? How do you interact with other participants, how do you interact with us, how do you communicate things?

- ✓ Authenticity can you show us a bit of you? We're not expecting you to be anyone else. Authenticity is really important in the work for us, so we want to see a bit of your personality and who you really are.
- ✓ Alignment with our values do our values resonate with you? Do they seem like an approach that you want to be part of?

Remember, these are all things you need to show us – it's not enough to talk the talk, you've got to walk the walk. So that means things like pushing yourself outside your comfort zone to participate fully in the workshop, it means having a go and being open to stuffing up, it means taking on feedback and having fun with it and being yourself.

It's also helpful to know you're not competing against the other participants. We don't have one position that you're all fighting it out for (as fun as that would be) – instead we can take on as many people as are the right fit.

Preparing for the workshop

Our workshop is going to be absolutely jam-packed. We're squeezing what's usually a whole day into a few hours, so there's a few things we want you to think about ahead of time.

Have a read through the rest of this document and follow any of the links provided – you by no means need to be an expert in all the information we give you, but you do need to understand it enough to share your thoughts on it and think about how it might apply to the work in practice.

And, if you're really keen, you can also check out our website.

- For information on the 1-to-1 support: www.likewise.org.uk/support
- For information on our community space, wellbeing activities and events: www.likewise.org.uk/whats-on
- For reports and evaluation about our work: www.likewise.org.uk/literature



1. OUR VALUES

Our values are much more than something we paint on the wall and occasionally look at. Instead our values inform our whole approach to our work and way of being with people. Learning, Doing and Belonging our three core values, and we'll be looking at these in more depth during the Selection Workshop.

Have a read, make some time for contemplation and we'll see what you think when we join the workshop.

Learning

We see everyone in our community as a learner. Volunteers, staff, clients and placement students alike – we are all engaged in a constant process of learning. We believe that traditional models of care whereby knowledge is transferred in one direction only (from an 'expert' to a 'service user') are not only ineffective, but create relationships of inequality. In contrast, we believe every individual is an expert in their own story. The challenge is therefore for us as staff and volunteers to be open, curious and genuine in our interactions so that we can learn from individuals as to how we can best support them.

Good social care rests on our capacity to create an environment where knowledge and understanding can be shared between everyone – where we learn from the complex realities of our clients, we learn about ourselves and we learn from the relationships we create.

Doing

We believe that the best learning happens through doing. That's why when it comes to your experience with us, you're working hands-on, front-line. It's also why we focus on doing things with clients, rather than for them. We believe that doing is vital for change – it's only through the act of doing that we can learn and discover our capacity to feel and behave differently. Therefore we aim to work alongside our clients, to do things together, so that they play an active part in the doing.

We're pragmatic about what we can do together too. If we can do something, we will. We want to support people to take advantage of opportunity in all its diversity, so we try to avoid

the rules, bureaucracy or tightly-defined practice that tend to limit our roles and instead just get in and do it. If that means changing a lightbulb, attending a choir or stopping by an unexpected art show, we do what we can to let it happen.

Belonging

We want Likewise to be a community in which everyone can belong. For us this means being much more than a space that is inclusive and safe – it means creating a space where people can, firstly, be genuinely accepted for who they are and, secondly, be valued as a person who can actively contribute to our community, rather than being a passive recipient of a service.

In order to truly value people for who they are, we need to accept them – just as they are. It sounds simple right? But so often services fail to see someone as anything more than their problems and then in getting straight to the business of changing that problem, infer that the client is starting at a deficit – that there's something wrong with them that needs changing. We want to take the approach that every individual is okay just as they are. This does not contradict the fact that people often join our service in the search for change.

Acceptance allows for both ourselves and for clients to see and come to terms with things as they are, and from there make decisions. It allows us to focus on the person and relationship first, and the outcome or change second. It's also worth noting that accepting a person does not mean accepting everything they do or say – we can separate someone's behaviors and actions from them as a person.



2. THE PARABLE OF THE BLOBS AND SQUARES

A long, long time ago – we made a video called 'The Parable of the Blobs and Squares'. Check it out: www.vimeo.com/42332617



Consider the following:

- What you think the main lessons are from the Parable of the Blobs and Squares?
- How does it link in with the values of Learning, Doing and Belonging?

3. REFLECTION AND WELLBEING

Lastly, have a think about:

- What reflection is, and why it might be important to us in the work.
- What wellbeing means to you.

What happens after the workshop?

After the selection workshop Indi will be in touch within the week to let you know whether or not you've been selected. Remember this is just as much a selection for you as it is us, so really think about whether you think we're the right placement opportunity for you.

IF YOU'RE SELECTED

We'll move on to organising the practicalities of your placement. Based on the information you provided to us on your application, we'll confirm:

- Your start date and end date
- How many days per week you'll be doing
- What days of the week you're available and whether you're available evenings

Remember, it's important to think about what's financially sustainable for you, so consider what this means for you.

We'll also arrange for you to have a DBS check and ask for any documents we need to sign with your university to confirm things.

Once we have everything confirmed it'll be a case of sitting tight and waiting until we get closer to your start date. When that date is getting close, you'll likely:

- Be asked to attend an induction with other students starting around the same time as you – this is a great opportunity to meet staff and peers alike and get some light training on the fundamentals.
- Be allocated your Pod Leader who will act as your Supervisor and be designing your timetable.

Final note

If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to get in contact with me (indi.angel-auld@likwewise.org.uk) – I'm here to help. Otherwise, if you apply there'll be plenty of opportunities to ask questions in your interview or at the Selection Workshop.

Good luck with your application and we look forward to meeting some of the newest members of the Likewise Team!