

I was lucky enough to be a recipient of the MA bursary from the Music Therapy Charity for the final year of my music therapy training. The bursary helped me cover the cost of the tuition fees and support my counselling sessions which are a requirement of the course. In my second year I began to feel huge financial pressure as I had moved house twice and relocated to my home town of Derby, whereas in my first year I was living in Reading which was much closer. I was commuting to Bristol once a week from the Midlands, and going into my third year I found my financial situation became harder to maintain. I had to take on extra evening teaching and gigging at weekends to cover a lot of monthly costs, which of course meant I had less time to commit to studying. It was becoming a strain on my mental health, as I had worries about all the academic work I needed to complete as well as trying to work as much as I could to cover living costs, petrol, tuition fees and books.

I found the first year of study quite difficult, I had never taken on such an academic challenge before and I hadn't worked out much of a work/study balance. I was disappointed with my first-year marks and knew that I needed to be more dedicated in my second year. My second-year placement was at a brain injury unit, and my passion for this area of work helped me see my potential as a music therapist. My academic and clinical work improved dramatically and I achieved much higher marks for my second year. However, due to financial worries at home, I was concerned that I may not be able to continue on into my third year as I needed to be working more to cover my fees, meaning I wouldn't have been able to give a day of the week to my placement.

My supervisor recommended me for this bursary because of the huge improvement and commitment to study I had shown over my second year, and I was able to work enough over the summer to secure my first terms fees of third year. The bursary meant I was able to cover my fees for the final 2 terms of study, and use some of it to attend my counselling sessions, which I really needed at the time. I am extra grateful for the support as when COVID-19 meant all the schools were closing and the hospital wasn't letting any non-NHS staff in, all of my work immediately stopped and I was left with no income. Luckily, the bursary had meant I could pay my fees and dedicate all of my time to my final term of study, including my dissertation and Viva Voce case study and discussion.

I am extremely thankful to the Music Therapy Charity for their incredibly generous support. Without this bursary I wouldn't have been able to progress to my third year and achieve my dream of becoming a music therapist.