



Syed's experiences of disclosure and reasonable adjustments

Profile

Syed is in his mid-20s. He has a chronic health condition, causing pain and discomfort.

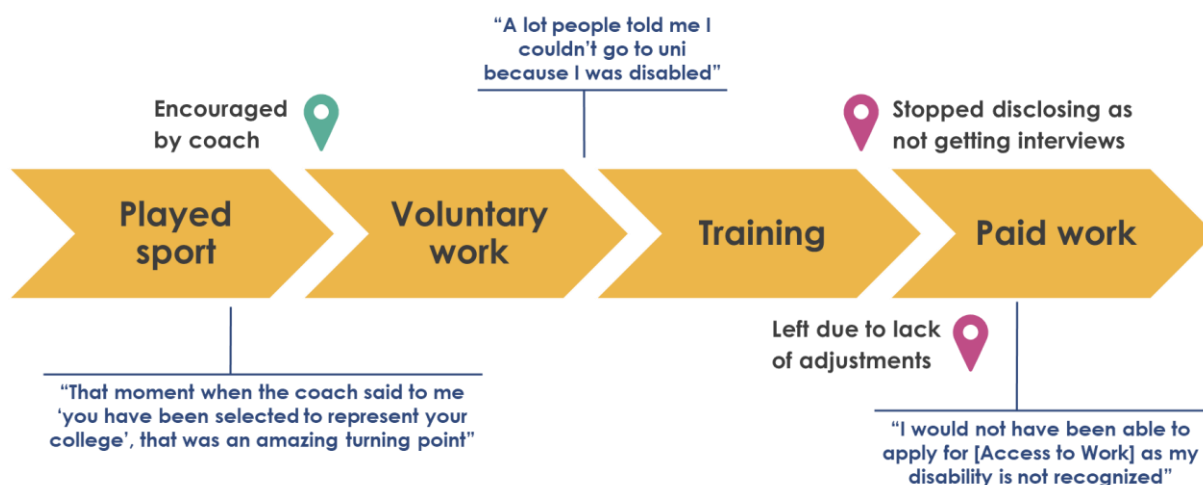
As a child, Syed was frequently in hospital. Support at school was poor, and expectations of him were low amongst his community. He felt like he was 'written off' because of being disabled. However, Syed always had strong support from his family, and when he went to college, he got the one-to-one support he needed, and began to achieve good grades. He started to play football, and his coach helped him to build his self-belief.

Syed wanted to use his experience to help others. This led him into coaching disability sport and studying sport development coaching at university. He works full time as a sport development officer for a local authority and has a voluntary role for a community sports charity.



"I started my career in disability sport because I have lived experience and felt I could make a difference to people's lives."

Syed's journey





Disadvantaged by disclosing disability

Syed's key challenge in getting a paid role was getting past the application form. He went 7 months without getting an interview, until his sister suggested that he stop ticking the box to disclose a disability. After that, he began getting interviews.

At interview, because his health condition is fluctuating and not always obvious, Syed could avoid disclosing it - which he often did, because of concern about how he may be viewed by employers, compared to non-disabled candidates. But not disclosing could make it difficult to get an understanding of whether the job would really work for him in practice.



"Employers don't look at a disabled person's performance, they look at their disability and they just see a negative."

Same role, different employers

Syed has had two similar paid, full-time roles. In his first role as a community sport development officer, he had very negative experiences as a disabled employee. This had been his 'dream job', and he was gutted to have to leave because of this. He got a similar role in a different organisation, with a completely different working environment and culture. What makes the difference is the friendly, supportive and open culture in the team, where he feels he can be himself, give his best and make a difference.

Barriers

- Work from home request turned down.
- No support or flexibility around caring responsibilities.
- Passed over for opportunities.
- Not allowed to make a small change to uniform.
- Staring and comments behind his back by colleagues.

Enablers

- One to one support from his manager, both regular and ad hoc.
- Flexibility – being allowed to work from home, use TOIL to manage time, and colleagues cover his work on days when he is not able to work.
- Trusted to complete work, without questions about when or where this happens.



It is a safe space where I can go to someone and bring up issues where my condition might affect my work."