

## Aoife McKiernan on an Internship in Manchester with Dr. Arpana Verma, EUPHA Section on Urban Public Health

In May 2018, I spent 6 weeks in the Division of Population Health, Health Services Research and Primary Care at the University of Manchester as an intern, and will always look back on my time there very fondly. I am currently completing my BSc in Health and Society in Dublin City University, a course which is relatively broad, and so I chose EUPHA's Urban Health section as I felt it was an area in which many public health topics overlap.

Arpana Verma, the president of the Urban Health section, was my supervisor. On paper, the diversity of Arpana's experience and career was extremely impressive, but in person it was her ability to juggle what seemed to me to be an enormous number of tasks, always with a sense of humour and a smile, that I learned the most from. The team was very sociable and I got to know them during their healthy habit of a lunchtime walk every day. These colleagues then quickly became friends through the habit of after-work drinks on a Thursday! The department made me feel very welcomed and at home. I knew I could always ask for help and guidance on the work which helped me on my way to feeling less like the fish out of water that I certainly was!

Although I couldn't pick one highlight from my internship as it was a joy from start to finish, I was very lucky that my time in the department coincided with The International Festival of Public Health. Researchers from all around the world spoke about and presented the work which they were contagiously passionate about.

Things were going very well with Arpana and the team at work, but since the internship also ran in tandem with two unusual occasions- the World Cup and a heatwave, my social life box was also ticked! Manchester is not famous for good weather, but it is famous for football. The sun and soccer came together in a wonderful summer of having good fun with new friends in the city- who were horrified that I did not know there was a difference between Manchester United and Manchester City. I do now, I promise!

I would recommend a EUPHA internship to any student who is considering it. I was sorry to have to leave and there were tears on the plane as I said goodbye to a wonderful 6 weeks in Manchester and all of the friends I made there. The internship helped me to familiarise myself more with the world of public health. I feel it has given me new skills and a confidence that will springboard me into my final year of studies at university, and experience that will stand by me as I journey into my career in the future. I am writing now from the Public Health Department in the University of Otago, New Zealand, where I am completing a placement- an opportunity that would not have come my way were it not for Arpana, her team, and the doors that were opened up to me through my EUPHA internship.

