

Serena Dashwood – Functional Skills Case Study Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust

I had been working for Norfolk Community Health and Care NHS Trust for the last couple of years and I was really enjoying my role. I had seen in weekly messages that there were opportunities to progress but I soon realised I needed to have a higher grade in maths to be able to apply for the Healthcare Assistant Practitioner (Level 5) apprenticeship standard. So I had a discussion with the Trust's Talent for Care Team and my leads to gain advice on what support was available to gain my maths qualification.

I applied for the Functional Skills course that was facilitated through the Trust and delivered by Norfolk Community Learning Services. Following being accepted on to the functional skills cohort for maths, I was enrolled in a 6 week course. The course was half a day, once a week to learn and prepare for the exam at the end of the course. It was difficult at times as being in a classroom environment and with maths never being a strong point, I had some anxiety, However, the tutor was very friendly and approachable, she was able to explain different methods to help me understand how to learn the areas of maths that I found more difficult. After completing the level 1 maths exam with a pass, I enrolled for the level 2 as this was required to apply for the Foundation Degree Apprenticeship.

The level 2 course felt a bit more intense as the content was harder and knowing that I needed to pass the exam in order to apply for the Apprenticeship, created further pressure. Throughout this cohort the tutor was very supportive and ensured we had practice papers to use in our own time to learn exam techniques.

At times I thought I would fail and felt that I would not get through the exam. I did have to revise almost every day and was adamant in giving it my best shot. I was booked in for the exam and although nervous, I felt I had prepared well and wanted to pass.



The anticipation of waiting for the results felt like a lifetime, however, fortunately after a few weeks I received the email with good news. I have to add though that I do not think I would have been so successful if it wasn't for the commitment from my tutor, and her patience not only with me but with the whole class. I would definitely recommend anyone who was thinking of progressing in their role and needed functional skills to apply as the lessons were not as daunting as I initially thought they would be.

After completing my Level 2 Functional Skills Maths qualification, I applied for and was successful in obtaining a place on the Healthcare Assistant Practitioner (Level 5) apprenticeship and began the two-year foundation degree in January 2020, alongside my current role as a Community Assistant Practitioner.

