

# National Apprenticeship Week 2021

## Allied Health Professions Apprenticeship Pathway



### 1. What is your name?

Christopher Shaw

### 2. Where do you work?

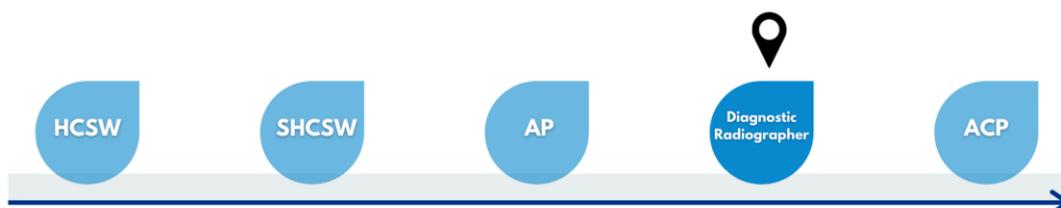
I am an Apprentice Diagnostic Radiographer with the Royal Cornwall Hospitals Trust, based across multiple hospital sites as a member of the Clinical Imaging department.

### 3. Which apprenticeship are you doing and what does the study involve?

I am currently finishing the first year of a three-year Diagnostic Radiographer Apprenticeship. I have previously completed a level 3 health and social care apprenticeship as part of my role as clinical imaging assistant in the MRI department. Completing the level 3 qualification was an important factor in getting selected for this degree apprenticeship as it showed prior relevant learning and the ability to learn whilst working full time.

The Diagnostic Radiographer apprenticeship is a three-year degree course taught primarily via distance learning with practical skills being honed in the workplace. Every three months the cohort meet up at Exeter university for a week-long 'campus week' where we receive lectures, classroom sessions and undertake any exams. Our employer is required to give us 20% of our working week for study and will allow us extra study time whenever needed, for example before important assessments.

The important distinction between the usual undergraduate course and the apprenticeship is the ability to keep working and earning a full-time wage while learning a new skill set. We are also able to spend more time working practically with patients to develop the skills needed to become an effective radiographer.



#### 4. What does your job role involve?

A typical day revolves around shadowing experienced radiographers and practicing clinical skills. As full time members of staff we receive the same treatment as everyone else but are supernumary so can jump between different modalities and departments depending on learning needs. It has been challenging learning all the new skills, especially the science and academic writing as it is over 20 years since I was at school. However, the university's academic mentors have provided good support and this year's examination results have exceeded my expectations.

Fortunately, I had a good understanding of the role of the radiographer from working so closely with them for years but I had no idea how much anatomy and physiology knowledge was required. The myth that radiographers just push buttons could not be further from the truth, there is a lot of medical knowledge going on behind the scenes. They just make it look easy.

#### 5. Why did you want to do an apprenticeship?

After recovering from cancer ten years ago, I decided to join the NHS, having been inspired by the people that had cared for me. I became more interested in clinical imaging and secured myself a permanent role as a Clinical imaging Support Worker based in MRI where my duties were wide ranging and very interesting. We were involved in all aspects of patient care from security screening, insertion of cannulas and aftercare of the patient.

My interest in radiography and the role of the radiographer grew whilst in this role, but, unfortunately I was never able to consider training to become a radiographer due to the cost of university and the need to take three years off work. With a young family to support, this just was not an option.

In late 2019, I heard about the upcoming Diagnostic Radiographer Apprenticeship. The prospect of being able to train as a radiographer whilst continuing to work and get paid seemed almost too good to be true. Competition for places on the first cohort was very fierce with a large number of imaging assistants applying for two places but I was fortunate to secure one of those places.

#### 6. What do you want to do once you qualify?

As a qualified radiographer I will have an array of different career paths to choose from. Of particular interest at the moment is MRI, Nuclear Medicine, CT or Interventional Radiography, although I am currently really enjoying general radiography.

Depending on the direction I take, I may have opportunities for further learning including postgraduate qualifications and could progress into reporting radiographer/advanced practitioner or even consultant radiographer. The sky is the limit in clinical imaging and with constant advances in technology and available imaging techniques there really is no way to predict where you may end up.

