

Case Study:

Trainee Nursing Associate Apprenticeship

**Emma, Trainee Nursing Associate,
North Lincolnshire GP Surgery**

Emma (pictured right) is in the first year of her Nursing Associate Apprenticeship and is being supported by her mentor, Dawn (pictured left).

Here Emma and Dawn share their perspectives of introducing this new role into their practice.



What made you want to become a Nursing Associate and how did the practice support this decision?

Emma: I wanted to train as a Nursing Associate in order to expand my knowledge and enable me to do more things for the patients at my surgery. I felt like I had reached the limits of what I could do as a Health Care Assistant, so it seemed like a great opportunity.

Dawn: This new role came about at the right time. Emma wanted to progress and as a practice we were in the process of looking at the structure of the team and succession planning. We feel there is a place for Health Care Assistants, Nursing Associates, Practice Nurses and Nurse Practitioners as part of our nursing family within the practice. Having a Nursing Associate will enable the Practice Nurses and Nurse Practitioners to focus on urgent care, minor illness and patients with complex needs.

What has been the most rewarding part of the apprenticeship so far?

Emma: The most rewarding part has been gaining new knowledge through lectures and study. The course is well structured and has enabled me to look at things that I have knowledge of in much greater depth. So far, I have learnt about the heart, lungs and circulatory system – this has been very interesting!

Dawn: It is great to see how Emma is growing in confidence with the apprenticeship; she will bring a new set of skills to the team as she learns more and when she eventually graduates.

Have you or the practice experienced any challenges during this apprenticeship?

Emma: The academic aspect has proved to be the most challenging part for me – the essays in particular! Thankfully the university has been supportive with this, especially the library staff who have helped me with study skills. I also had to undertake the Care Certificate whilst I was studying as I didn't have this in place beforehand which added another challenge.

Dawn: It has been a largely positive experience but, as with any new role, there have been some minor issues to overcome. For example understanding the funding arrangements and ensuring monies were in place. Also organising placements has been tricky. So it has been important for us to establish relationships with the university and other local health and care employers to enable them to happen. The university were able to support us with placements in their local area; however we wanted placements local to us as we felt this would be of greater benefit to our practice.

How have your colleagues and patients within the practice adjusted to the changes brought about by the apprenticeship?

Emma: My colleagues have been very supportive; they are aware of when I am away at university or on placement and step in to cover my absence. Our regular patients are aware of my apprenticeship and often ask me how I am getting on with it which is nice.

Dawn: We have a great team here and, as a training practice, promote a culture of staff growth and development. It is great to see how the team are adapting to this new, emerging role.

How has the apprenticeship fitted in with your work/life balance?

Emma: It has felt like a massive rollercoaster in terms of adapting to academic study whilst working and being a mum. It is becoming easier as I adapt to my new routine and I know it will be worth it in the end.

Would you recommend this apprenticeship to others?

Emma: Yes definitely! It opens so many doors and also enlightens you about things you have already done but didn't have the in-depth knowledge about. I think it is brilliant and I wouldn't hesitate to recommend it to anyone interested in taking up the role.

Dawn: Yes absolutely we would recommend it as we can foresee where the role will add value to our staff and patients. In due course as the role becomes more established, we anticipate that Emma might be able to undertake smears, vaccinations, travel clinics and chronic disease clinics under the direction of a registered nurse subject to policies and procedures being updated.

The findings from this case study have supported the development of dedicated resources for employers. These can be found on the Humber, Coast and Vale Excellence Centre website at:

<http://humbercoastandvale.org.uk/how/workforce/>

