



Meet the apprentice

We are introducing to you **Sian Meredith**, a business administrator apprentice at Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

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How did you get your apprenticeship?

I was attending Sixth Form before my apprenticeship and I studied Sociology, Religious Studies, and Geography. I applied for University and received an unconditional offer for my first choice university, however, I was unsure about what career path to take. At school, I was encouraged to go to university as they saw this as the 'best opportunity'. Therefore, I received little information about apprenticeships and felt that university applications came as a priority.

I did a lot of research and conclusively came to the decision to undertake an apprenticeship. I found my apprenticeship at a school's career fair, and the Oxford University Hospitals stand appealed to me instantly. I took the time to ask about the apprenticeships which they provided, not realising that they offered non-clinical roles. I was informed about the current vacancies and the process of applying. I left the career fair feeling particularly interested in the opportunities at Oxford University Hospitals and applied that night!

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Who is your training provider and what is the study model like?

My training is provided by the Oxford University Hospitals training centre, who is an employer provider. I learn onsite and we have a training day once a month in which we complete the units of my course. There are also additional supported self-study days where the training provider offers guidance for our study. I am given 8 hours of self-study every two weeks; this is an opportunity to complete the tasks set on a file or to complete any timesheets for off-the-job training I undertook during the week.

3

What type of things have you been doing in your off-the-job learning?

Once a month I have a training day with my training provider in that we learn the units of my course. This allows me an opportunity to be assisted in any work I find challenging. I complete reflective journals each week to think about what I have learnt during the week. This is a good way for me to reflect on how my skills have developed. I have been lucky to have experienced a lot of workplace shadowing. I have attended multiple meetings with my manager where I have had the opportunity to get involved in new tasks. These meetings also allowed me to meet people from other organisations and form connections which I believe is particularly useful for my career. I have also received training from my colleagues to develop my computer skills. I have learnt how to effectively use Excel, Outlook and also how to use external websites including Eventbrite which I used to set up an event at the Trust and was running the admin behind this event.

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What has been the hardest part?

The hardest part of my apprenticeship was the first few weeks. It took me a long time to feel settled. Although my team was lovely and welcoming, it took me a while to become used to a new working environment, especially from being a school student. I struggled to ask for work when I believed that I had no work left to complete. My colleagues were helpful and made me feel involved, however, I did not enjoy feeling unhelpful when work was inconsistent. I feel more settled now and am getting used to the working day and the challenges that I am due to face.

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What has been the best part?

The best part of the apprenticeship was developing my confidence. Before my apprenticeship, I was really shy and struggled to talk to new people. However, after starting my apprenticeship I have encountered many social situations where I needed to have the confidence to engage with people that I don't know. Being able to engage with new people has been beneficial as I have formed relationships with other members of staff. I am grateful that I was encouraged to attend events in which massively helped to improve my confidence.

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What do you hope to do next?

I currently work in the corporate division of Oxford University Hospitals but I would like to have the opportunity to work in different divisions in the NHS. The clinical side of work interests me so I would like to receive more information about this. My next step may include undertaking a higher-level apprenticeship and I feel that my future is working as a member of an NHS Trust.



What tips do you have for people who want to do the same apprenticeship as you?

My main tip would be to take every opportunity that becomes available to you. I have been offered many chances to visit different organisations and attend events where I can meet new people. I was doubtful at first about attending these events as I didn't know anyone and have a small knowledge base as I am a new apprentice. However, I am so grateful to have met new people and get the opportunity to hear how other organisations work. I believe that the best way to progress in an apprenticeship is to build connections with others. This is why I am eager to take on every opportunity that becomes available to me.