

Meet the Mentor

**Resource developed jointly by the HASO
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Niki Burton-Hoult

Niki is an Assistant Theatre Practitioner at Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust, as well as doing the level 3 Learning/Mentor apprenticeship herself she is also mentoring 5 apprentices with more joining soon.

Niki, tell us how did you become a mentor?

Whilst working as an Assistant Theatre Practitioner there was a group of apprentices who were struggling with their apprenticeship and making the criteria fit their role, as it is mainly ward based. There was also a gap for the assessors who didn't have a theatre/surgical background to actually understand the role and how to map it to complete the criteria and the standards. I saw this gap and knew I could fill it with my 13 years experience in theatres and my previous completion of a Foundation Degree in Health and Social Care Surgical pathway. So I applied for a Learning/Mentor apprenticeship, leading the way for 5 new apprentices.



What has been your experience so far completing the Learning/Mentor apprenticeship?

I am new to this course only starting in April 2021 due to delays with Covid-19, so far it has proven positive for me. I am already teaching apprentices and sharing with them my knowledge and skills to ensure they have the tools to complete their care certificate and start their apprenticeship standards.

I have found that their targets and achievements are being met from my previous learning as well as being reinforced by my learning on the Learning/Mentor apprenticeship.



What kind of individual support do you give the apprentices?

Every other Friday the apprentices spend the day with me teaching relevant topics for their apprenticeship standards and we do progress catch ups.

We have created a WhatsApp support group for any issues or to share positive outcomes. We hold peer support sessions for the apprentices to help each other and one-to-one meetings.

How have you benefitted from being a mentor?

My confidence has grown seeing the apprentices achieving their targets and sharing my knowledge and skills with them to give them the basic skills they need to build on in their job role. I feel proud of myself when I am given positive feedback about how well they are all doing and a sense of achievement that I am able to give something back to the trust and help the next generation of the NHS.

How has your organisation benefitted from the apprenticeship programme?

Apprentices have gone on to do Nursing or Operating Department Practitioner apprenticeships and are becoming the future of the NHS and the building blocks to help combat staff shortages.

What have been your biggest challenges whilst being a mentor?

Dealing with negativity from people who do not like change.

And your biggest successes?

Seeing the apprentices grow in confidence, achieve their goals and move forward into the next stage of their journey.

What do you hope to do next?

I would like to ensure all apprentices coming into theatres are given the best start possible by continuing with my programme, as it has proven beneficial to them. I would like to roll the programme out throughout the trust so all the apprentices receive the same input and have a mentor they can go to at anytime. I would also like to gain a teaching qualification to improve my teaching methods.

What tips do you have for people wanting to become a mentor?

Build a good relationship with your apprentices. Give them the confidence to achieve any goal they set themselves, nothing is out of their reach.