

# BECOMING AN ORAL HEALTH PRACTITIONER - MEET THE APPRENTICE

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**Meet Emma Jolliffe, a Level 4 Oral Health Practitioner apprentice working at Community Dental Services within Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.**

We spoke with Emma about her journey as an Oral Health Practitioner apprentice, keep reading to find out.

**1****Where do you work?**

I work for the Community Dental Services within Berkshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. Within our services we see adults and children with additional needs and children unable to cope with dental treatment in a regular dental setting. Also, Berkshire Community Dental services run three general anaesthetic lists for children and adults referred into us. We provide domiciliary care for residents of local care homes and patients who are housebound.

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

Health Education England is the course provider.

The study model has been quite variable due to pandemic situation, when we started we had virtual study days and now we have face to face study days with all the students together. We have had two practical days so far.

**3****What types of things have you been doing in your off-the-job learning?**

I have mostly been attending study days and catching up with the coursework. I have been able to get to know my community a little better with some of the coursework tasks, which was fun. We have had a practical day in the skills lab at Wexham Park Hospital along with a practical session, getting a feel for the hands-on tasks and qualifications I will gain once I have completed and passed my apprenticeship.

**4****What has been the hardest part?**

I think for me the hardest part was having the confidence in myself, when I first started this apprenticeship I was very apprehensive and not overly keen on studying as its not a strong point of mine however, the support and feedback helped me immensely and has given me boost of confidence to believe in myself. It is still a slight struggle for me to study, but I am getting there.

**5****What has been the best part?**

I think I have quite a few best parts so far about the course. The amount of knowledge and skills included within the course content. Meeting all the professional and knowledgeable people involved with teaching the apprenticeship. The practical days. Getting to know the other dental nurses and sharing our job and life experiences so far and getting my first ever distinction grade for a piece of work.

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### **What do you hope to do next?**

I believe the world of dentistry is changing and I really hope to be a part of some of the first Dental Nurse led clinics and Oral Health training programmes within my area. This includes working in Dental practices and GP surgeries along with visiting schools, care homes, secure hospital units. As well as providing training for as many people as possible in the hope to help to prevent dental decay, tooth extractions amongst young children and those with additional needs.

I know I may not be able to change everyone's view on the importance of good oral hygiene and health but if I could help just a few people that would be the best feeling.

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

Firstly, I'd say speak to your manager(s) regarding this apprenticeship and gain their support to help you complete the application and the time that's needed to complete the apprenticeship.

Allow yourself the time to adjust to learning again if it's been a while.

Do not hesitate as I anticipate this apprenticeship being as popular as the dental hygiene and therapy courses. Gaining this qualification will give you great options for further career progression.

Most importantly believe in yourself to take on this great opportunity and challenge, to gain more knowledge, experiences, and qualifications.