

# Meet the Mentor

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## Razia Fulat

**Razia is an apprenticeship mentor at Sheffield Children's NHS Foundation Trust, and is currently mentoring 2 apprentices completing the Level 6 Operating Department Practitioner Degree apprenticeship.**

### **Razia, tell us how did you become a mentor?**

I became a mentor after introducing the Operating Department Practitioner (ODP) apprenticeship in the department in which I work. When I was tasked with implementing the apprenticeship, it came to me as merely an idea. I had to research the individual programme of study, as well as apprenticeships as a whole in order to develop my understanding of how they worked before sharing this information with stakeholders. I also liaised with the link university who would be delivering the theoretical learning to the apprentices. Once I was happy that I had enough information, I submitted a business case to my Trust. I successfully received funding to recruit two apprentices onto the ODP apprenticeship programme in its flagship year.



I then set about recruiting for the two vacancies, creating a job advertisement, supporting applicants by looking into their existing qualifications and conducting the first remote interviews.

### **What kind of individual support do you give the apprentices?**

With the apprentices, I have regular catch-up meetings, including four a year with a member of the university team, to review their overall progress. I also create their timetables, provide pastoral support, plan off-the-job teaching (delivering some myself) and allocate their time to suitable learning opportunities.



## **How have you benefitted from being a mentor?**

The most significant benefit for myself was the opportunity to collaborate with a university, which subsequently led to me being offered a job as an Associate Lecturer, delivering teaching to all students on the Operating Department Practitioner apprenticeship programme.

## **How has your organisation benefitted from the apprenticeship programme?**

By introducing the apprenticeship programme, we have seen improved morale amongst our support staff, who previously did not feel as though they had the opportunity to progress in their careers. The apprentices, once qualified, will also help us to reach our target for the number of qualified practitioners working in the department.

## **What have been your biggest challenges whilst being a mentor?**

As a clinical mentor, it can be difficult to balance mentoring with the number of other responsibilities that I have.

## **And your biggest successes?**

Watching support staff learn and grow.

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

Due to the success of the Operating Department Practitioner apprenticeship programme, I am hoping to recruit two further apprentices in May 2022.

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

Just stopping your apprentice on the corridor to ask how they're getting on will go a long way!