

# FEATURED APPRENTICE

## SIAN SYKES

## ADVANCED CLINICAL PRACTITIONER



**Meet Sian Sykes a Level 7  
Advanced Clinical Practitioner  
apprentice working at Sirona Care  
and Health.**

We spoke with Sian about her journey to  
become an Advanced Clinical Practitioner  
apprentice, keep reading to find out.

### WHAT APPRENTICESHIP ARE YOU STUDYING AND WHAT DOES THE STUDY INVOLVE?

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I am currently studying the Advanced Clinical Practitioner (ACP) apprenticeship which is my first experience as an apprentice and will result in a full master's degree. The main benefit of being an apprentice is having protected time at work to develop my learning in practice. I spend 20% of my contracted hours doing a variety of activities for example attending university, shadowing experienced healthcare professionals from different teams and learning new techniques under supervision.

I am currently halfway through my apprenticeship and have completed modules in advanced assessment, diagnostic clinical reasoning, research and leadership. I have great support from my mentor, university course leads and other students in my cohort.

The course is multidisciplinary which is fantastic for networking and also learning from a wide range of professionals at different stages in their careers. Every 3 months myself, my mentor and university lecturer meet to ensure that I am balancing both the demands of study and work successfully and enable me to ask for any support I need.

### WHAT DOES YOUR JOB ROLE INVOLVE?

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I holistically assess patients that are acutely unwell in their own homes and make a decision as to whether they can safely stay at home or need hospital admission/further diagnosis.

For patients that are medically well enough to stay home I develop a treatment plan with for them. This may involve referrals for short term care packages, referrals to district nurses, therapists and liaising with more experienced members of the team and GPs.

I also give advice as to how to manage their acute condition, advice on when they should seek further help and prescription of appropriate exercises that can maximise their physical function.

### WHY DID YOU WANT TO DO AN APPRENTICESHIP?

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I wanted to develop my assessment and management skills as a clinician and take on new skills that I felt would improve the experience for the patient and ensure the patient is seen by the 'right person, with the right skills at the right time'.

I felt that with enhanced skills I could manage patients safely and avoid the need to refer some patients to GPs, allowing them to recover at home. I worked as a Physiotherapist before the apprenticeship and I regularly managed patients that had deteriorated whilst on our caseloads and felt I was able to learn how to manage those patients independently so that they were not always referred onto GPs.

I also wanted to enhance my portfolio of recognised qualifications and skills and be more employable in future roles. Physiotherapists are well placed to undertake roles in advanced practice particularly in urgent care in the community and I felt that an apprenticeship would help me develop the skills I needed to apply for an ACP role in the community.

### WHAT DO YOU WANT TO DO ONCE YOU QUALIFY?

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I was really fortunate to be successful in an application for a role as an ACP during the course of the apprenticeship programme, however I am very much still progressing in my knowledge and skills and feel that once I am qualified I will be able to deliver higher quality care and knowledge to the team and patients that I see.

I am currently studying non-medical prescribing and I am excited to be able to utilise more skills which will ensure that patients are managed in the most efficient and timely way. Ultimately with more experience I would love to be able to work towards consultant practice level in urgent/community care.