

Meet the Mentor

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Nick Wright

Nick is a Senior Radiotherapy Engineer at University Hospitals of North Midlands (UHNM), and as part of his job he is mentoring apprentices who are completing the Degree Apprenticeship in Radiotherapy Engineering.

Nick, tell us how did you become a mentor?

A series of recruitment failures resulted in a different approach and as I had shown interest in the past I sort of volunteered to become a mentor.

What kind of individual support do you give the apprentices?

We have 3 monthly supervisor reports for the first 3 years, with targets and supported guidance, an open office approach to support with all senior staff involved in their specialist areas. As there was no apprentice model we had to develop our own in-house program, which is now being considered throughout the West Midland region as an alternative approach to replacing the shortage of engineers in the future.

How have you benefitted from being a mentor?

It has helped to utilise my supervisory experience which previously had limited use in a small team environment, it also enables me to diversify my own development in training.

How has your organisation benefitted from the apprenticeship programme?

UHNM has benefited from increasing its profile in the engineering field as usually the outside public consider the NHS to be staffed solely by doctors and nurses. It has been helpful to connect with local colleges and universities to sell the careers of engineers within their students.





What have been your biggest challenges whilst being a mentor?

We decided that we would take our apprentices straight from college, so effectively 18 year olds with little life skills. The benefit of recruiting young apprentices is their fearlessness and keenness to learn. The downside is that they lack in the social skill areas, which when things go smoothly this is easily overlooked and when they go off-track a little there is little support for the mentor to call on.

I found that our first apprentice faired very well but our second two apprentices have had challenges resulting in a different type of mentoring and even developing better and easy to understand progress reporting.

And your biggest successes?

Developing local young engineers and enabling them to succeed to professional registration with a degree that can be used for a lifetime.

What do you hope to do next?

I hope to develop a mechanical workshop training module, offering it out to our local region as there is a current training need in these areas.

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

Unfortunately think of the lesser attractive mentoring outcomes, like the ways to make a success from a failing apprentice rather than the instant glory of a successful one especially in young people. For example making the progress steps smaller and documented to increase their confidence which in turn makes the overall task seem achievable, not everyone learns at the same rate so be prepared to change your approach to make it work.