

Meet the Mentor

**Resource developed jointly by the HASO
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Denise Wills

Denise is a Theatre Sister at University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust, and as part of her job she is mentoring apprentices who are completing the Level 3 Health and Social Care (perioperative) apprenticeship.

Denise, tell us how did you become a mentor?

I have been mentoring student nurses, student ODPs, post-reg students and HCAs for many years. I have completed a coaching and mentoring course at Southampton City College and I am also a Royal College of Nursing Learning Representative.

Which apprenticeships are you currently mentoring?

I have been mentoring Level 3 Health and Social Care (perioperative) for the HCAs in my department and supporting the HCAs who have started their Registered Nursing Associate, Degree Nurse and ODP apprenticeships as well as HCAs completing their Nursing Degree with the Open University.

What kind of individual support do you give the apprentices?

All of the apprentices can contact me via email or WhatsApp. I also meet them regularly as 3 of them work HCA hours in the department. I have also supported them at meetings with the apprenticeship provider when asked.

How have you benefitted from being a mentor?

It has been satisfying over my 38+ years as a mentor to see people progress into more senior roles and know that I have helped them in some way to achieve these roles.





How has your organisation benefitted from the apprenticeship programme?

The trust has greatly benefitted from using the apprenticeship scheme to "grow your own" staff and develop the next generation of staff to work within the trust. The trust is totally committed to helping all the workforce to be able to access apprenticeships to gain the education and practice to go further in their careers.

What have been your biggest challenges whilst being a mentor?

Finding enough time to help everyone whilst completing my own job role and my union role as a Learning Rep.

And your biggest successes?

Seeing my first HCA/student nurse complete and pass her course to become a Registered Nurse which then inspired my next HCA/student nurse to go for her goal of becoming a Registered Nurse. That type of inspiring goes a long way to showing that mentorship is so rewarding.

What do you hope to do next?

As the trust Lead Union Learning Rep I am looking to help develop the opportunities for all AHPs to access apprenticeships. They are much smaller in number but there are HCAs in Radiology, assistants in Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy, biomedical scientists, pharmacy technicians as well as electricians, carpenters etc. and now admin and clerical. It is interesting to help inspire new apprenticeships becoming available.

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

Go for it, mentoring and coaching is rewarding when you see the next generation of staff in healthcare achieving their potential.