

# Meet the Mentor

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## Sandra Watkins

Sandra is a Trainee Nursing Associate Mentor at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, and as part of her job she is mentoring apprentices who are completing the Nursing Associate apprenticeship.

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

I have become a mentor following early retirement. I have 36 years of clinical experience in a variety of services and wanted to pass this knowledge on. My role is to educate Nursing Associates in supporting people with a learning disability so whatever service within Merseycare they are, they will receive safe and effective care.

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

This is a new post and we are in the process of meeting all the people I will be supporting. I am offering 1:1 sessions, attendance at team meetings and teaching in specific areas. I have also made contact with the universities to support in the delivery of teaching regarding supporting people with a Learning Disability.



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

I feel it is too early to tell but I have always had a passion for teaching and for sharing of knowledge.

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

Again it may be too early to tell but it is hoped that the service will benefit through the delivery of the improved quality of care that people with a Learning Disability will receive.



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

Contacting and meeting the apprentices due to the restrictions in place due to Covid.

**And your biggest successes?**

The enthusiasm I appear to be getting from the apprentices to learn about supporting people with a Learning Disability.

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

Develop teaching packages and deliver to the trainees based on their needs and share this learning with their teams so they do not feel isolated in their knowledge and ideas.

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

- Share your knowledge.
- Be confident in meeting the "Team" as well as the apprentices.
- Listen to what the apprentices wants from you.