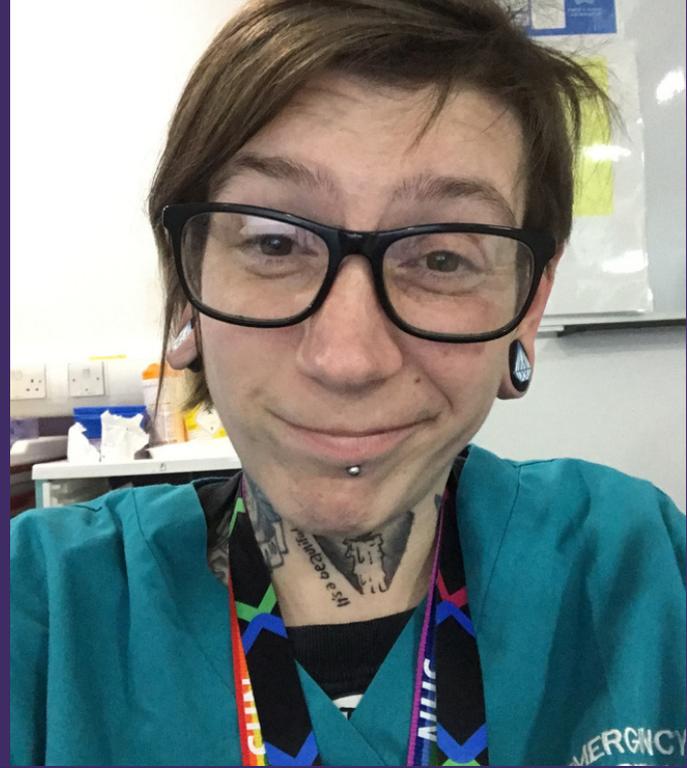


Clare Fowler Chelsea and Westminster NHS Foundation Trust



We spoke with Clare Fowler in February 2021. She had just completed her Higher Development Award (HDA) and Care Certificate. Clare is now a Registered Nurse Degree Apprentice (RNDA) and is in her final year. Keep reading to find out more.



What is your current role?

I am currently an RNDA / A&E Technician and in my final year of my nursing degree.

How did you get into your current role?

I started my career as a phlebotomist after completing a phlebotomy training course.

What apprenticeship are you studying and what does it involve?

I am an RNDA. I am currently in my final year of the three year Nursing BSc (Bachelor of Science) with NMC (Nursing and Midwifery Council) registration through

Buckinghamshire New University. My time has been split between university, placement and working on my host ward in between. It is the same as a normal nursing degree except that you spend your time working alongside studying. This has proved a challenge but it is also extremely beneficial as it has made linking the theory I have learnt to my practice a lot easier.

Why did you want to do the apprenticeship?

I wanted to do the apprenticeship so that I could become a registered nurse. This has always been a dream of mine, however I could not afford the fees to study full time.

The apprenticeship has allowed me to further develop my skills and earn a living alongside. It has also allowed me to link skills that I have learnt whilst on placement back to my host ward. For example, with collaboration of the practice development link on my host ward identify areas of improvement within collaborative working with other departments.

Do you feel that completing the Care Certificate and HDA helped with your career progression?

Definitely, there has been such an overlap of skills that I learned on the Care Certificate and Higher Development Award (HDA) that have been essential and transferable to the nursing degree apprenticeship programme.

The Care Certificate offered a great foundation and introduction to studying. The Higher Development Award built on that knowledge. I remember the leadership and management aspect of the course clearly and this really helped with my third year leadership and management essay. Also the study skills I learnt whilst doing the Higher Development Award have proved so valuable especially when it came to time management and balancing studying and working.

What do you want to do once you complete your apprenticeship?

I would love to return to my host ward as a newly qualified nurse and join the colleagues who have supported me throughout this process.

What would you say to someone considering an apprenticeship or the Higher Development Award?

I cannot recommend the Higher Development Award and apprenticeship enough. If you have been out of education for a while or just are nervous about studying again the Higher Development Award is the best place to start. The apprenticeship is hard work but the experiences I have had have been priceless and unforgettable. The knowledge and experience you gain as well as the confidence to change things to improve patient care and outcomes makes all the hard work worth it.

If you would like to access further information on any of the below areas, click on the links:

- [Care Certificate](#)
- [Higher Development Award](#)
- [Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship](#)