

APPRENTICE OF THE WEEK

TOBY GALLAGHER

LEVEL 5 NURSING ASSOCIATE (NMC 2018)

**Meet Toby Gallagher,
a Nursing Associate
apprentice at
North Bristol NHS Trust.**

What apprenticeship are you studying and what does the study involve?

I started as a healthcare assistant at North Bristol NHS Trust, completing the entry level apprenticeship programme over 12 months.



After finishing the first course I was keen to increase my learning and take more responsibility in my workplace. Due to my experience as a healthcare assistant and previous school qualifications I was able to apply directly to the Trainee Nursing Associate programme. This is run with the University of the West of England, and I have been on that for just over a year now.

Why did you want to do the apprenticeship?

I had been working in an office previously in a completely unrelated career but had been interested in healthcare for some time. The start of the Covid pandemic felt like a sign for me to take my first step into a healthcare career and I haven't looked back! I currently work on Southmead Hospital's Acute Medical Unit (AMU).

What is your current role?

I am now on the Trainee Nursing Associate programme, working towards a band 4 nursing associate position.

It is an apprenticeship programme run by North Bristol NHS Trust in conjunction with the University of the West of England, and I have now been on that for just over a year. Each week I spend 30 hours in the hospital, working directly with the nurses, healthcare assistants, doctors and other members of the wider team to provide care for patients. I also have one study day each week where I attend lectures and work on assignments for modules such as Communication, Anatomy, and Pharmacology.

How did you get into your current role?

From work, I saw another opportunity to increase my knowledge. I applied, got shortlisted for an interview and was successful which I was delighted with. I am a year and a half in, the rest is history but it's onwards and upwards now, hopefully!

What has been your proudest achievement on your apprenticeship to date?

Over time I have been able to develop my understanding of the conditions that can cause an individual to be admitted to our unit and recommended treatments, whilst learning clinical skills such as obtaining blood samples and taking ECGs (Electrocardiograms.) and much more so to be honest I am just proud of what I have achieved so far.

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

I will be happy to continue to work as a band 4 nursing associate, might take a learning break but eventually I hope to go on to become a band 5 nurse.

What would you say to someone considering an apprenticeship?

To anyone considering the course who is coming from a background of a health care assistant (even if you have only worked in the position for a relatively short time like myself) I would highly recommend it as a way to learn more and at a steady pace. It maintains a similar routine to my previous working week, with either two or three shifts and one study day each week, letting you mix your academic progression with on-the-job practice in your main placement. The assignments mix research, essay writing and presenting, and are sometimes challenging, but there is a lot of support available from the university and it's exciting being able to draw on your experience from work and choose assignment topics that you are passionate about.

To find out more about Nursing Associate apprenticeships at North Bristol NHS Trust, contact - TraineeNurseAssociates@nbt.nhs.uk.