

APPRENTICE OF THE WEEK

**KAREN COTICI**  
**LEVEL 6 REGISTERED NURSE**  
**- DEGREE (NMC 2018)**

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**Meet Karen Cotici,  
a Registered Nurse apprentice  
at Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS  
Foundation Trust, studying at  
Keele University.**

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

I am currently a Registered Nurse Apprentice on the Adult Nursing pathway at Keele University.

The apprenticeship is split between theory studied at Keele University and practice hours based at Leighton Hospital.

**Why did you want to do the apprenticeship?**

I have a young family, so the apprenticeship route allowed me to study whilst still earning a wage to support my family.

Working in Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for ten years, progression to a nursing role was something I've always wanted to do. When the apprenticeship became available at Keele University, I knew it was a great opportunity, as the university has always had a good reputation for the students it develops into nurses within our trust.

## What is your current role?

My role before undertaking the apprenticeship was an A&E (Accident and Emergency) Technician. Since starting the apprenticeship, I am currently employed by Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as an Adult Student Nurse Degree Apprentice.

## How did you get into your current role?

Working with Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust for thirteen years, I have worked as a HCA (Healthcare Assistant) in Cardiology and then A&E, then extended my skills within A&E to work as a Technician.

I had discussed on several occasions with the Trust's Practice Educators' team about undertaking a Nursing Degree, but having a young family it was never possible. Then the Trust advertised the apprenticeship, and it was the perfect opportunity for me to extend my learning and develop my career as an Adult Nurse.

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

My achievements to date, that Keele University and Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust have supported me with, have been more than I could ever have planned for. I have experienced many areas of nursing I would never have considered before the apprenticeship.

One area was Community Nursing where I had the opportunity to write about my experience for the Queens Nursing Institute which both Keele University and Mid Cheshire Hospital Trust supported me with.

A year later, I covered a different area of District Nursing and had a second opportunity to write for the Queens Nursing Institute and I hope that these two publications have given people an insight into what great area of nursing this is.

I have also had the opportunity whilst undertaking an innovation module at Keele University to develop and implement my own innovation that was accepted by my trust and implemented in practice. This was based on a bed management system between A&E and the bed management team and seeing this go live in practice, knowing it was something I developed, has been a very proud achievement for me.

Keele University then went on to recognise this and have nominated me for a Student Nursing Times Award, that I was then **shortlisted** for. I head down to London with Keele University later this month to present my innovation bed management system in the hope to win the Innovation Award in April this year.

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

Once I've completed my apprenticeship I will return to A&E at Mid Cheshire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. But I hope in the future to undertake further learning in education and hope that what I've done now, and in the future, will go on to support and inspire future Nurses.

### **What would you say to someone considering an apprenticeship?**

An apprenticeship is a unique experience because you start your learning as part of a team, this for me was very reassuring as all my mentors and assessors have been amazing.

Being an employee as well as a student, makes me feel like I have had a whole team invested in my learning and not just placement areas. We all need as much support as we can get on the journey of nursing and it is very rewarding, but it can also be very challenging. I could not have achieved as much as I have without both teams behind me.



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