

APPRENTICE OF THE WEEK

SARAH SHEPPARD
LEVEL 5 NURSING ASSOCIATE
(NMC 2018)

We spoke to Sarah Sheppard recently who is a Nursing Associate Apprentice at North Bristol NHS Trust. Keep reading to learn more about her experiences as an apprentice.

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

Hello, my name is Sarah and I am in my second and final year of my Trainee Nursing Associate Programme at North Bristol NHS Trust. It is an apprenticeship programme that will lead to a Foundation Degree which is run in conjunction with the University of the West of England.

Why did you want to do the apprenticeship?

I joined North Bristol NHS Trust in 2016 and I started working as a Ward Clerk. I then worked as a Health Care Assistant in a Gynaecological Outpatients Clinic. I loved it there. It was not my first job; I think I have had a varied career as I have previously worked as a primary school teacher and then as a funeral director. I am delighted to be undertaking the Trainee Nursing Associate Programme as the learning opportunities have been great and it is within a field that I am passionate about.

What is your current role?

I am working towards a Band 4 Nursing Associate position. I work on the Cotswold Unit here at North Bristol NHS Trust which deals with a lot of different medical issues for women and children. In my current position, I can plan and implement the care alongside my colleagues within the nursing team and the wider multidisciplinary teams. It's certainly a hands on role and it's never boring.

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How did you get into your current role?

I had to have a certain number of qualifications prior to sitting an interview for the role. I originally went for the Trainee Nursing Associate Programme because I have a thirst for knowledge and wanted to further my education and my career. Some of the modules we have done have been quality assurance, medicines management, communication, promotion of health and prevention of ill health. However, my favourite has been anatomy and physiology as it was a real hands-on module where we did OSCE's (Observed Structured Clinical Examinations) and practical training in simulation labs on campus at university. My favourite aspect about the course is learning on the job and meeting fellow like-minded people who want to give the best care to their patients and learn in a safe environment.

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

Some life skills that I will take away from the TNA course are communication skills and being able to stand up in front of a Multi-Disciplinary Team meeting (which includes so many different health professionals) and talk about a patient.

I have developed confidence in my skills and in my ability and I am delighted to be an advocate for the patients in my care. This is what I am most proud of so far.

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

My long-term goals are to continue and become a band 5 nurse. This has been a great way to learn while working and being able to build on skills I already have.

I also gain so much new knowledge, in a field as large as nursing there is so much to learn, so if you love learning like me then then the sky's the limit.

What would you say to someone considering an apprenticeship?

If you were thinking about starting the Trainee Nursing Associate Programme and I could advise you before starting, what I would say is: Do it! it is a great experience you will learn a lot and make new friends and colleagues along the way and not just in your base placement but also in other areas of medicine and while on placement.

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

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