

TOM GAUKROGER

My name is Tom Gaukroger and I have been with Calderdale and Huddersfield NHS Foundation Trust (CHFT) for around 14 months, this is including my volunteering experience.

Volunteering at CHFT was the first real job experience I had after finishing sixth form college. After sixth form I had no drive to go to university because I wanted to go into more 'on the job' learning. A lot of personal factors in my life had left me totally unmotivated to strive for a career path. When I saw the opportunity to apply for volunteering with the NHS I was a bit hesitant at first but speaking from where I am now, I am so glad that I went ahead with it. It gave me some structure, something to strive for and valuable unique experience in the healthcare sector.



In terms of Volunteering at HRI (Huddersfield Royal Infirmary), I did my portion of volunteering on Ward 21 of the hospital. As my goal was to go into a more admin type role, you could probably understand why I was a bit hesitant about working directly on a ward but I thought to myself: when am I going to get an opportunity like this again? And so I did it and like I previously mentioned, the experience was great and really gave me much admiration for the tireless work all the staff do to keep each ward running.

I think the idea of volunteering is overlooked sometimes but from when I was volunteering I was greatly appreciated and supported and staff were glad there was an extra hand. Even someone to just do the tea trolley rounds. Hospital staff cannot be here there and everywhere and being a volunteer just helps take that little bit of stress off staff.

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From volunteering I was greatly supported and encouraged to apply for my current apprenticeship role and I always felt that if I needed a helping hand doing an application or help with a question, I could always rely on someone.

I am currently an administration apprentice in the Elective Surgical Unit at HRI doing a customer service course with Calderdale college. I am now coming up to the end of my apprenticeship and will be going into a full time position. My manager, colleagues and all staff on the unit have been there to support me when I needed it with my learning and I greatly appreciate them for this. This role has greatly improved my confidence and I am now hoping to go on to keep working hard and possibly getting into higher positions. This apprenticeship opportunity was only possible after doing my volunteering and I will always be grateful to be given that opportunity.

