

SARAH ANGUS

Level 6 Registered Nurse Degree
(NMC 2018)

We recently spoke to Sarah Angus who is a Registered Nurse Degree apprentice with the learning disability team at Southampton General Hospital, University Hospital Southampton NHS Foundation Trust. She spoke about her experiences of apprenticeships.

WHAT DOES YOUR ROLE INVOLVE?

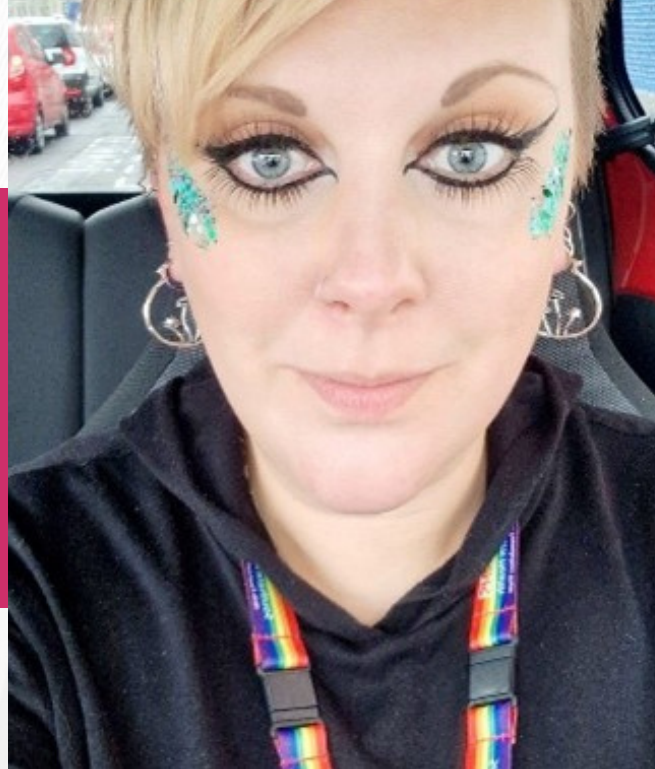
I work as a Band 4 Nursing Associate for the Learning Disability Team at Southampton General Hospital. It is my job to make acute healthcare more accessible and tolerable for patients with a learning disability and/or autism. My role varies from day to day, but I am patient-facing first and foremost. We support people by providing accessible information, performing wellness visits, liaising between the patient, the professionals involved and the patient's circle of support, in a bid to make the hospital journey less worrying and provide reassurance. We make recommendations regarding mental capacity, best interests and role modelling appropriate support techniques to ward staff and others who do not know the patient. I work on the adult team, but we also have a paediatric learning disability nurse for under 18s.

WHAT SUBJECTS DID YOU STUDY AT SCHOOL?

I was most interested in media, so I studied Media Studies and Graphic Design alongside core subjects such as Maths, English and other languages.

WHY DID YOU CHOOSE TO DO AN APPRENTICESHIP? AND WHY DID YOU CHOOSE THIS OPTION INSTEAD OF GOING TO UNIVERSITY?

I attended university at 18 and left a fully qualified journalist. During studies, I worked part time in a scheme for adults with schizophrenia. I loved it and found work in learning disability services after graduating. I never looked back because it was my passion. When the opportunity came to do an apprenticeship, I was 38, a Mum and would have never been able to access Uni again financially. The apprenticeship has been an absolute gift.



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HOW DID YOU FIND OUT ABOUT YOUR APPRENTICESHIP?

I found out through my employer.

WHAT WOULD YOU SAY TO STUDENTS WHO ARE TRYING TO CHOOSE BETWEEN UNIVERSITY AND AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Do it! You can gain your qualifications and receive some pay, what's not to love? It will give you the chance to get into Uni education as a mature student and you will find amazing, like-minded colleagues.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE ADJUSTMENT TO WORKING LIFE?

I have been in the role for a couple of years now, but I find I am more confident in it as I train.

HOW CAN PARENTS BEST SUPPORT STUDENTS THROUGH THE PROCESS OF APPLYING FOR AN APPRENTICESHIP?

Let them know that reporting procedures are different for apprentices – they will need to evidence and demonstrate their work to ensure their employer and the Uni are satisfied. This isn't too difficult and becomes automatic.

WHAT IS THE BEST PIECE OF ADVICE YOU GOT FROM YOUR PARENTS/CARERS?

Make the most of every opportunity.

WHAT ONE THING SHOULD PARENTS DO TO EDUCATE THEMSELVES ABOUT THEIR CHILD'S APPRENTICESHIP JOURNEY?

What will be expected of the apprentice, so they can ensure their child is prepared and ready to take on new opportunities. Familiarise yourself with the employer's ethical standpoints and supervision systems to ensure that their child will receive support and understanding, as studying can be stressful and overwhelming if they lead busy lives.

