

NORTH BRISTOL NHS TRUST

TRAINEE NURSE AMBASSADOR PROGRAMME



We spoke to North Bristol NHS Trust recently, who offer the Level 5 Nursing Associate (NMC 2018) apprenticeship standard at the trust. They have recently introduced a TNA (Trainee Nursing Associate) Ambassador programme and they spoke to us about this fantastic ambassador programme.

Could you tell us about the trust?

North Bristol NHS Trust is a large acute teaching hospital servicing the needs of people from Bristol, South Gloucestershire and North Somerset. North Bristol NHS Trust is a regional centre of excellence for neurosciences, plastics, burns, orthopaedics and renal.

It is also a dedicated teaching hospital for many specialties from university students to apprenticeships. They offer apprenticeships in a wide range of different subjects.

How long have you, as a trust, been offering the Nursing Associate Apprenticeship?

We started a pilot programme with 11 apprenticeship students back in 2017. Since then, we have trained over 100 Nursing Associates with 30 having the opportunity to train on the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship programme and 10 becoming registered NMC Nurses this year. The others are about to embark on that learning journey in May this year. We now currently invest in both programmes committing to the increase of our staffing levels.

While some students have left, most of those who went through our apprenticeship training still work here at North Bristol NHS Trust.



Why did you decide to set up the TNA Ambassador Role?

As part of the clinical education team that support our nursing apprentices, we felt that a collegiate support role would be useful to our TNA's. We have 5 Ambassadors in place offering Peer support across TNA cohorts and the divisions in which they work within the Trust.

Tell us a little bit about the Ambassador role?

As well as offering Peer support our ambassadors are happy to come and take part in our TNA inductions, for 1st year Apprentices and our Welcome to Year 2 session and our interview days. We select ambassadors from second year and their knowledge of the programme and advice is invaluable to the younger apprenticeship students. They are a role model for the programme, and it demonstrates their leadership qualities which is also useful for their own portfolio.



What have been the successes?

It is very early days for us and our ambassadorship role. It is a few months young, and we are hoping to achieve a lot of our targets in the next six months and evaluate after that.

What have been the challenges?

It has been a challenge to set it up and get volunteers. Second year students feel it's increasingly difficult to juggle their overall range of commitments. They often do not like to take on more challenges. However, there are those who are passionate about the programme and are often happy to come forward.

Many are nervous of it as they feel they will have to do a lot of public speaking, but we reassure them, it is only one small part of the role and there are spaces for all skills.

How do you feel the role has benefitted the organisation?

We believe that it offers another level of support for our apprenticeship students to avail of. It also offers a more direct contact to other Healthcare workers who may be interested in a nursing apprenticeship. It ensures they have someone at hand to ask advice from or to be directed to the Clinical Education team as needed. We now have had more inquiries from people across all directorates and a lot of these have been because of our ambassadors.



Any additional comments?

If anyone would like more information on our nursing apprenticeships here at North Bristol NHS Trust please e-mail TraineeNursingAssociates@nbt.nhs.uk

What tips would you have to an employer setting up a similar scheme?

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It is easy to set up the role and leave it which would be of little use. Our advice would be to have regular meetings with the ambassadors to check in with them and to offer them opportunities to help at recruitment events, interviews, inductions etc.

Have jobs for each ambassador's skill set. These people relish opportunities to learn and to advance themselves. Embrace that passion.

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NAOMI SKINNER

I am a Trainee Nursing Associate on a very busy elective Surgical Ward at North Bristol NHS Trust.

Why did you decide to undertake an apprenticeship?

There are several reasons as to why I wanted to undertake a nursing associate apprenticeship and I was delighted to get the opportunity.

I am in my second year now. It has been a challenge but well worth it.

For me an apprenticeship was a better fit with my commitments outside of work. As a mature student it can be difficult to progress in a career alongside other life commitments.

The apprenticeship gives me the best of both worlds, it allows me to build a career, progress with my studies and earn at the same time!

The apprenticeship allows me to marry together my learning with practice. It has implemented the skills and knowledge taught at university which has enabled me to grow as a student and a professional.

It also gives me the knowledge and the tools to work within my role and develop my responsibility, which in my opinion, is a unique feature over other routes into the nursing profession.



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I am a Trainee Nursing Associate on a very busy elective Surgical Ward at North Bristol NHS Trust.

Why did you decide to become a TNA Ambassador?

I decided to become a TNA ambassador because I was already promoting the programme to my colleagues, and to anyone who would listen to me!

By becoming an ambassador, I can boost awareness of the programme, along with the benefits and limitations, to those who are interested in undertaking it. I enjoy advocating for the programme as it is a wonderful route to take for those who are committed to progressing in healthcare.

What would you say to someone that is thinking about becoming an apprentice/ ambassador - any advice?

It would depend on who I was talking to and their own reasons for undertaking the programme. Mostly I say to people who are interested in the programme to do it, but also to consider their own capabilities at the time, the programme is not easy, and it can be challenging to juggle, university, work, and a life outside of work.

I try to remind people that communication is key to their success, by communicating with the trust and university staff they will help you with anything they can. It is so important that you can communicate your needs and learning goals effectively.

Advice I give to everyone undertaking the programme is that the grass is always greener!

For people who are worried about any limitations of the programme and who compare themselves to others, a person will get out of the programme what they put into it.

NAOMI SKINNER

I am a Trainee Nursing Associate on a very busy elective Surgical Ward at North Bristol NHS Trust.

What have been the successes?

In my view the whole programme has been a success. I would have to say that the staff involved in the programme have been fantastic. Everyone I have encountered, here at North Bristol NHS Trust, who are involved in the Trainee Nursing Associate programme have been supportive, encouraging and caring for the welfare of their students.

The staff want you to do well and will help you in any way possible to enable you to do this. I believe the TNA Ambassador role is another branch of this wonderful support.



What have been the challenges?

A particular challenge that has been ever present throughout the programme is the balance of home, work, study, and university. It can be quite intense at times and requires attentive organisation and management to stay on top of everything.

The Ambassador role for me has been fine so far, but if you want to undertake it you really must be organised and have a balance between all your different commitments.

NAOMI SKINNER

I am a Trainee Nursing Associate on a very busy elective Surgical Ward at North Bristol NHS Trust.

What are you most proud of?

Myself! I am proud of my progress and of the learning and skills that I have achieved with the support of everyone involved in the programme.

Specifically, I am immensely proud that I am now able to cannulate, as I found this quite difficult and did not want to hurt anyone! I was fortunate to be able to experience this skill in practice with many different supervisors and so was able to learn all their tips and tricks.

As an ambassador I am proud to be role modelling and supporting apprenticeship students and other less experienced members of staff.

Any additional comments?

The Trainee Nursing Associate role is an excellent way of furthering a career in healthcare.

I have spoken to many nurses about the programme and a lot of them have said that they wish it had been an option when they were looking at going into nursing!

North Bristol Trust has been a wonderful place to complete the programme and I am so grateful to be able to work here!