

# First Occupational Therapy Apprentices complete at Solent NHS Trust

Emily Patterson - Digital Marketing Apprentice | Solent NHS Trust



At Solent NHS Trust, we are celebrating the completion of our first Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship cohort.

Alison, Georgie and Laura started their apprenticeship journeys in the height of the COVID-19 pandemic and have risen to every challenge thereafter.

Our Head of Allied Health Professionals, Sallyann Smith also commended the three “trailblazer” apprentices on their achievements:



I am so delighted to be celebrating the incredible journey of these Solent trailblazers who are about to become our first Occupational Therapists with a BSc (hons) qualifying following the apprenticeship route with our University of the West of England partners. I'm immensely proud of their individual achievements and excited for the careers they will have. I am also proud of the Solent team who have tirelessly worked to be able to provide this alternative route of career progression for our staff. This apprenticeship route has enabled us to grow our own staff, boost our recruitment and expand our Occupational Therapy team. This is very much part of the widening participation agenda as it allows staff who perhaps were not able to commit to studying through a traditional route to become an autonomous healthcare professional – it's a perfect combination of studying, on the job training and employment which will fit around family life.

I asked Alison, Georgie and Laura what completing their apprenticeship means to them and to give us an insight into their apprenticeship journey.



# Alison Stovell



I would encourage anyone to do an apprenticeship as you are fully supported, you learn via theory-based lectures and within work environment placements all of which enables you to become a qualified registered professional.

The apprenticeship not only gives you the opportunity to increase your skills and knowledge in your chosen area but also enables you to grow and develop as a person, which feels so empowering.

I will be forever grateful to the Solent NHS Trust Apprenticeship team for providing this fantastic opportunity.

## Key achievement

Alison presented her dissertation research at **UWE Research Conference** with very positive feedback.

# Georgie Cook



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I loved doing the Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship as it gave an opportunity to share experiences, work while you are learning, be supported by your team and the trust as well as having great placement opportunities. The university has also been supportive, and the learning experience is tailored really well.

Achieving the Apprenticeship means that I can now progress in my career, have more opportunities, have a better work/life balance, and overall feel I can finally start looking forward.

I would encourage anyone interested in progressing their careers to do an apprenticeship because there is a lot of support, there are no worries about training costs or how you will be paid. There are great placement opportunities, university support and while 4 years sounds like a lot... it does go quick!! Best thing I ever did!!

## Key achievement

Georgie won 'Clinical Apprentice of the Year' in Solent NHS Trust's 2023 Apprenticeship Awards



# Laura Ravenscroft



The Occupational Therapy Apprenticeship has been an insightful journey for me both personally and professionally. I would encourage all those interested in a varied and valuable career to embark on the UWE apprenticeship which offers a comprehensive exploration of occupational therapy foundations through to therapy practice and plenty of treasures in between.

The programme may seem daunting at first and throw in a fair share of challenges, but it offers great personal development, flexibility, engaging content, connection, varied clinical placements, peer learning, life-long friendships, networking, and unwavering support from the UWE team.

Beginning the OT apprenticeship was a significant decision in my career and one which has revealed a world of possibilities to me; I am very proud of Cohort 2020A and to be a member of the green trouser family.

## Key achievement

Laura was nominated for the Royal College of Occupational Therapists Research Foundation 'Early Researcher Prize 2024'

I had a wonderful time meeting with our apprentices and listening to their stories. It was heart-warming to see their joy as they talked about their future prospects, which stem from their hard work and dedication. I'm eager to see where the next steps in Alison, Georgie, and Laura's journeys will lead them.

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Prospectus



Contact us for more information about how Apprenticeships can benefit you and your workforce.

**Email** | [apprenticeship@solent.nhs.uk](mailto:apprenticeship@solent.nhs.uk)

**Website** | [www.solentnhstrust.co.uk](http://www.solentnhstrust.co.uk)

