

# Apprenticeship Success

Supporting lifelong learning with  
Living Well Partnership

Kate Long-Apprenticeship Lead, Hampshire and Isle of Wight Training Hub  
Thames Valley and Wessex Primary Care School

Living Well Partnership provides care for 45,000 adults and children across the eastern Southampton region.

Tracy Hatch has dedicated nearly 20 years to Living Well Partnership and recently completed her Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship, graduating with a 2:1. I had the opportunity to speak with Tracy about her inspiring journey, the challenges she faced along the way, and what motivated her to embark on a new career path as a mature student.

## What was your journey to starting the Registered Nurse Degree Apprenticeship (RNDA)?

“I began as a receptionist at the practice, then trained in phlebotomy and transitioned to a healthcare support worker role. The practice supported me through my NVQ3, and I spent 15 years as a senior healthcare support worker. I always wanted to become a nurse, but opportunities were limited. In 2018, Solent University launched the RNDA programme, and the practice backed my application. Without the earn-while-you-learn apprenticeship, attending university wouldn't have been possible.”

## What were the challenges faced during your apprenticeship journey?

“Before starting the apprenticeship, I had to complete my Level 2 Functional Skills in Maths and English at Eastleigh College. As a mature student at 48, I faced challenges like writing assignments and adapting to new IT systems. Placements were also challenging, my mature age was sometimes met with surprise and an expectation that I had more experience than other younger student nurses.”

## What advice would you give others considering the RNDA?

“Be sure to allocate time for your academic work and have realistic expectations about the extra time you may need to complete it. Also gather some background information before attending placements; it will make your first day easier!”

## How does it feel to be working at Living Well Partnership as a Practice Nurse now?

“On my first day I was really proud. I never believed I could do it and often had doubts throughout the apprenticeship. Becoming a nurse has been a great achievement and having worked in the NHS for 26 years, this is definitely the role I want to stay in. I am also now undertaking a Diabetes Diploma which will give me further skills and knowledge.”

## Feedback from Emily, Tracy's mentor.

“Tracy's extensive experience as a senior healthcare support worker in Primary Care gave her a significant advantage during her apprenticeship. The transition from apprentice to Practice Nurse has been really positive.”

## Congratulations Tracy on this incredible achievement and for exemplifying lifelong learning!

