

Celebrating Apprenticeships

Birmingham's apprenticeship programme, of which BCHC is part, was originally started in 2005. It brought together NHS Trusts, local colleges and universities to develop Birmingham residents who had the sensitivity and skill to become healthcare assistants within a GP setting.

Today, the programme offers roles in over 80 areas of healthcare from administration to management, estates and facilities and in clinical areas such as nursing, pharmacy and dental nursing.

Since 2012, BCHC has hosted 69 apprentices, and over half of them have remained in the Trust's employment afterwards.

Essential skills and apprentice manager Alex Kustas said: "Apprenticeships are a great way to grow our own workforce – something we need to do if we're going to be able to meet the growing demands on healthcare services now and in future.

"It's a win-win situation – you're getting a new team member who brings with them skills and enthusiasm that can boost your team's morale and productivity, while giving someone that initial step on the ladder, providing education and experience, and the chance to 'earn while the learn'."

Apprenticeship key facts:

- Apprenticeships are offered to people between the ages of 16 and 24 (18+ for patient contact)
- You can use an apprenticeship to train both existing and new employees
- BCHC apprenticeships are usually offered on a fixed term 12 month contract.



Shafeeqah Batool is an apprentice with the clinical photography and graphic design team, based at Birmingham Dental Hospital.

"When I found out about the apprenticeship programme I had just left school. While browsing the NHS jobs website for my mum I found the apprenticeship job vacancies.

I enjoyed photography at school so when I learned that there was an apprenticeship available with the clinical photography and graphic design team, I knew I had to go for it.

When I went to my interview, I was really nervous as I'd never been

Shafeeqah's story

interviewed before. Fortunately for me, the atmosphere was relaxed and welcoming. I was shown around a bit of the building and the department I would be working in, which made me feel a little more comfortable.

My role involves a lot of variety - ranging from creating ID badges for staff to helping out with PR photography and even sometimes helping out with patients. Since I've been working here, my communication skills have definitely improved and I feel I am a lot more confident than I was before and my knowledge of photography is still growing.

In the future, I would love to continue working for the NHS as I have always wanted to pursue a career in which I can help others. At the moment I am interested in phlebotomy.

I'm glad I discovered this apprenticeship programme as it has helped me prepare for the future; not only has it got me working toward a qualification, but it is also giving me on-the-job work experience."

Amba's story

Amba Fellows is an apprentice with the communications team, based at Priestley Wharf.

"I found out about the NHS apprenticeship programme through my mom, who works for BCHC. At the time I was beginning to look for the 'next step' in my career path as my time at college was coming to an end.

During National Apprenticeship Week, I went along to sessions at The Learning Hub at the Queen Elizabeth Hospital, to find out about the various roles available and to learn some valuable interview techniques. As soon as Lyndsay Stewart from the communications team explained the role available in their team, I knew it was for me.

Luckily, my interview skills training came in handy and I got the job!

Working in an office after being at college took a bit of getting used to but I am really enjoying it and have been given quite a lot of responsibility – from helping to set up the Trust's new social media network, Yammer, to managing my own staff success 'pinboard' page in ARCHway.

One of my most proudest moments so far was having a photo I took featured on the front cover of an external magazine!"

Joining the apprenticeship programme has been one of the best decisions I have ever made, and has opened up many opportunities for me. I have recently become an 'apprentice ambassador' for City and Guilds, which will give me the chance to share my experience with school pupils."

Want to follow Amba's journey? Check out her blog:

<https://ambasapprenticeship.wordpress.com/>



National Apprenticeship Week is taking place between 9 -13 March and celebrates the positive impact that apprenticeships have on individuals, businesses and the wider economy. ARCHway shares some of the success stories from BCHC's apprenticeship programme and how you can get involved.

Nicholas' story

Nicholas Biela completed a two-year dental nursing apprenticeship between 2012 -2014. He's now working as a dental nurse with the community dental service.

Nick's working life began stacking supermarket shelves but he was keen to find something where he felt he could help people.

"I didn't want to work in a supermarket long-term, so when I saw the apprenticeship opportunities on NHS Jobs, I went for it."

Nick was offered a two year contract as a dental nursing apprentice, which consisted of four days on-the-job training and one day at college taking a level three City and Guilds diploma in dental nursing, learning what the job entails, all while taking exams.

"I was thrown in at the deep end, taking on many roles including how to assist and set up for dentists, following protocols and procedures as well as having plenty of interaction with patients. I got to observe many different types of sedation, from gas and air to intravenous sedation. I also observed general anaesthetic in a hospital setting - when children are put to sleep in order to have their teeth out.

"At times it was stressful trying to manage my job and exams, however with these 'stresses' came many highlights. I really enjoyed working in the different placements and gaining all the experience, working with some great staff along the way."

Nick qualified as a dental nurse back in November 2013 and now works in a community dental clinic at the Richmond Primary Care Centre which treats patients of all ages with specialist dental needs. In addition to supporting patients through treatment, Nick is also responsible for ordering dental stock, completing daily checks around the clinic, assisting students and making sure they are following correct protocols.

Nick has also applied to be a panel member on the General Dental Council, which assesses cases of dental malpractice.

In the long term, Nick would like to move into senior clinical and managerial roles within the community dental service.

"The apprenticeship programme helped me get to where I am today," said Nick. "It has opened many opportunities for me and I think it can do the same for others, which is why I now promote the programme in ambassadorial role."



Shanese' story

Shanese Malcolm completed a healthcare level 3 apprenticeship at Moseley Hall Hospital. She is currently completing her nursing degree at Birmingham City University.

Shanese had wanted to be a children's nurse so when her time came to leave school, she took her first steps in this direction by working as a nursery nurse.

"I discovered pretty quickly that it wasn't for me – I realised that I wanted a role where I could provide a higher level of care to people.

"I saw that BCHC was looking for apprentice health care assistants so applied for that. There was only one job available, so when I got it, I was really pleased!"

Shanese was based with the assessment and treatment department but spent quite a bit of time on Ward 8 at Moseley Hall Hospital, caring for patients that had had a stroke. She also had the opportunity to work with other disciplines such as physio, amputee rehabilitation and dementia care.

Shanese added: "I also worked with occupational therapists to learn how they set up in patients' homes and attended multidisciplinary meetings to see the aims and outcomes of different patients.

"If I was ever stuck I could ask anyone for advice and support. The only challenge I faced was balancing theory and practical work, but I got through it.

"I particularly enjoyed working with my manager, Sally Meredith, apprentice manager Alex Kustas, the stroke team and the assessment and treatment team in the outpatient department."

It was this positive experience that spurred Shanese on to her next step – applying to do her adult nursing degree. She is currently completing her second year at university.

Shanese said: "I probably wouldn't be doing what I'm doing, or have experienced all that I have if it wasn't for the apprenticeship. I have met and worked with a great multi-disciplinary team, patients and their families. It's turned me into a better person and is the best decision I have ever made for my career. I didn't expect to get this far and am extremely happy with my progress."

Shanese was a runner-up in the 2014 Health Education West Midlands Awards in the category of 'Apprentice of the year'. She is pictured (left) with her manager and nominator clinical lead Sally Meredith.



For more information:

Contact apprenticeship manager Alex Kustas: **0121 466 6342**

Visit the 'apprenticeship' intranet page, which can be found within the learning and development/widening participation section of the intranet. Visit www.apprenticeships.gov.uk