



 **Class of 2020**

**EAST OF ENGLAND
APPRENTICESHIPS**

■ INTRODUCING NICHOLAS OWEN

Nick spends his hours working as a Healthcare Assistant at the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, where he primarily focuses on patient care and assisting onsite Nurses. He helps with the day to day handling of patients, updates on observations and follows reporting procedures to aid Nursing staff too.

Although working in this role currently, this had not always been the career plan Nick had imagined. Previously a qualified Carpenter, Nick knew he was seeking another challenge and loved the idea of helping others. For this reason, he began to explore his options around Nursing and discovered that the apprenticeship programme would help him to build a foundation of knowledge around healthcare. For Nick, being able to continue earning a salary whilst changing career paths and learning a brand new set of skills was a huge benefit. The apprenticeship programme was hands on and Nick preferred this to the option of becoming a full time student, so he decided to take the leap and apply! Nick's application was successful and he officially joined the Norfolk and Norwich University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in March 2019 as an Apprentice Healthcare Assistant, where he also worked to complete his Level 2 Healthcare Support Worker Apprenticeship Standard with City College Norwich.



JOB ROLE

Healthcare Assistant

COMPANY

NHS - Norfolk & Norwich
University Hospital

COMPANY SIZE

1001+ employees

APPRENTICESHIP

Healthcare Support
Worker Level 2



Classroom based learning was a huge advantage to the programme for Nick, as he found that being part of a group helped students to ‘bounce ideas’ back and forth and unpick the coursework theory. This was supported by the crossover between theoretical learning and completing tasks in his apprentice role, as Nick found the opportunity to put theory into practice a more effective learning method . With a newfound boost in confidence and knowledge Nick found the qualification gave him a significant edge in his apprenticeship and he began to thrive within his new position.

Nick commented on the improved levels of confidence the programme has given him in his abilities to do such an important job. Having learned an increasing number of new skills, the programme largely builds on initial two-week Healthcare Assistant induction training that all clinical staff are required to complete. From treating patients daily to noticing signs of deterioration, Nick now had a broad overview of knowledge that he could begin applying to his practical work.

In terms of the most challenging aspects of the course apprenticeship, Nick found the impacts of Covid-19 both on his apprentice role and qualification work) was a huge roadblock. It put a strain on his communication lines, and where Nick was confident demonstrating his newfound skills in practical assessments he now discovered this was being carried out through written witness statements and reflective accounts which created significant amounts of work. Being 30 years of age, Nick noted that there was definitely a ‘switch back’ to education that required some adjustment. This balance was hard to master at times, particularly given the wider implications of Covid-19 although Nick also mentioned how the virus has affected him positively , stating that the changes to his apprenticeship qualification forced him to reflect more deeply on his work, which benefitted him in the long run.

Given the ease in which Nick was able to switch careers while continuing to earn, he considers the entire programme a huge personal achievement. The apprenticeship provided a completely new working format to 'get stuck in to' and it wouldn't be overstating to say it completely changed his life as he now enjoys his work more than ever.

Nick is now in a full-time substantive role working as a Healthcare Assistant, and is soon to begin his Level 5 Trainee Nursing Associate Foundation Degree Apprenticeship. Nick has never regretted his choice to begin his Nursing career through the apprenticeship route, and states that 'completing the apprenticeship programme has provided me with a clear pathway to follow, and has allowed me to set personal goals along the way'. Nick is happy to admit that the end goal is still a 'way off' but feels motivated in understanding the steps he must take to achieve this. His ultimate aim is to become an Advanced Nursing Practitioner with a Masters in Prescription, although this could still change during the course of his career. The most important thing he noted was having 'small, achievable stepping stones to work towards the end goal'.





In terms of advice, Nick stated that the programme has gone even better than he could have imagined! Although initially considered a bit of a gamble, he would now recommend the apprenticeship programme to anybody with an interest in Health Care and Nursing and cites how important it was to continue earning whilst changing careers. He feels that he has received the support and guidance he needed in order to carve a totally new career path.

“IF YOU NEED SUPPORT AND GUIDANCE WHILST CHANGING CAREERS - AN APPRENTICESHIP IS AN AMAZING OPTION”



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