

# Apprenticeships Case Study

**Sarah Power**

**Chartered Manager Degree  
Apprenticeship in Health  
and Social Care (CMDA)**



**Team/Base:** Careers and Apprenticeship Team – Workforce

**What prompted you to become an apprentice/apply for your apprenticeship?**

Having made the move from my patient facing role into corporate services around 4-5 years ago I found myself presented with opportunities to lead on workstreams and take on more responsibility.

Whilst I was well supported by colleagues and able to develop experientially, I've always been someone who like to understand the knowledge and theory behind what I'm doing and be sure I'm working to the best of my ability.

As apprenticeship lead for the Trust, I was liaising with the University regularly to arrange the enrolment of other members of staff onto the CMDA programme and an opportunistic conversation with my link at the University one day, led me to consider the programme as a potential good fit for my own personal and professional development.

I took some time to think about it and discuss it with colleagues, friends and family and ultimately was supported to apply for the programme and it has proved to be exactly what I needed and helped me to transition into a new leadership and management role.

**Tell us about your role, what does a typical day look like?**

I lead on the careers and apprenticeship agenda for the organisation, with strategic, operational and line management responsibilities. My portfolio of work includes the Trust's apprenticeship activity, supporting workforce planning, our work experience offer, Care Certificate programme and community engagement work with schools, colleges, job centres and other organisations.

A typical day can be meetings with fellow corporate colleagues or our clinical teams, contract review meetings with providers, supporting existing apprentices or managing the recruitment of new apprentices. I'll spend time managing the Trust's levy account, facilitating contractual or enrolment paperwork with education providers. Some days I'll be preparing reports to provide updates and assurance to others relating to the agenda or working on the development of new ideas to support recruitment and retention in the organisation.

The most enjoyable working days tend to be those that involve careers conversations with staff, helping them explore options for their development or progression and it's a great privilege to be able to develop those relationships with

staff across the Trust and see many of them then go on to study for new qualifications and/or secure new roles or promotions. Equally it's great to get out into the community and work with local job seekers or young people and help support them to access our vacancies.

### **What is the best thing about your apprenticeship?**

My apprenticeship has given me so much more than I was expecting in terms of new learning and it is perfect for me at this stage of my career. It's giving me the chance to really develop my own self awareness and develop knowledge and skills that I can apply to my day-to-day work. I feel more confident in my own ability to lead and manage. I really believe my team and the organisation are benefiting too.

I attend Manchester Metropolitan University regularly for lectures and because it's a bespoke health and social care cohort I have the opportunity to network and share the learning journey with a real diverse group of leaders and managers from other local Trusts. Equally I am so fortunate to be surrounded by inspiring leaders and managers at Bridgewater who have been incredibly supportive and helpful throughout my studies.

The most beneficial thing for me personally is that the programme is an accelerated degree so I'm only studying for 2 years instead of 3 and on completion I'll receive not only my Apprenticeship certificate but a BA(hons) degree in business management, an NHS Leadership Academy Award and CMI registration and the cost of all of those qualifications is covered by the Trust's apprenticeship levy, for which I am truly grateful.

### **What would you say to others thinking about an apprenticeship?**

Don't discount it as an option, do some research about apprenticeships, whatever your age, role or wherever you are in your career journey an apprenticeship could be for you.

I suppose I am a little biased because of my role as apprenticeship lead but on a personal note I didn't see myself going back to University I thought that ship had sailed – but here I am with 6 months left to go and it was honestly the best decision I've made.

An apprenticeship programme is different to stand alone education and training if you identify the right one, everything you learn will support the work you do and your contribution to your team and the organisation as well as your own personal and professional development.

I'm not going to say it's a walk in the park, balancing work, study and family life is challenging. You will get protected learning time during working hours but you do need to know that you'll sacrifice some of your personal time too to study, especially on the higher-level apprenticeships but the rewards speak for themselves.