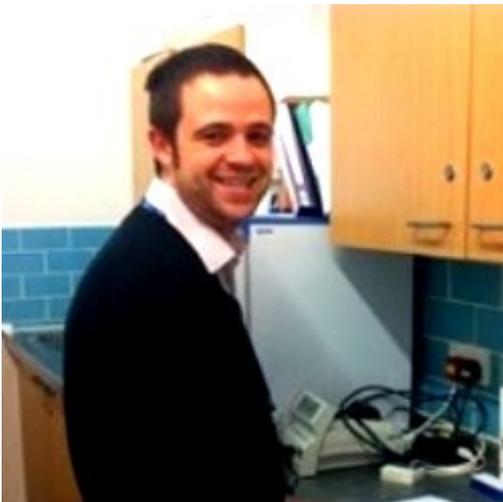


Real-life story - Thomas James

Thomas was looking for a career that would be both rewarding and challenging, so decided to pursue a career in pharmacy.



Thomas James Medicines management pharmacy technician

Employer or university North Essex Partnership Foundation Trust

Salary range Unknown

How I got into the role

The thought of a career in pharmacy had never occurred to me before, but I had been keenly on the lookout for something I could get my teeth into. When I found an advertisement for an assistant technical officer in a local hospital pharmacy, I decided to apply. I was very excited when I got the job, which was essentially working in an administrative role, acting as a link between the wards, patients and the pharmacy. The role gave me the chance to learn all about the pharmacy and how I could contribute to the running of it. I discovered that I really enjoyed the challenge of working in a busy hospital environment, the interaction with patients and the satisfaction of providing an invaluable service.

Before taking this job, I had never heard of a pharmacy technician, but once I learned more about the role, the more it seemed the perfect career for me. I decided to enrol in the pharmacy technician course at Stoke on Trent College, comprising of a level 3 NVQ and BTEC in pharmacy services, whilst working at Russells Hall Hospital. After I completed my training, I scoured the NHS Jobs website for a role that I would find both challenging and rewarding. I was determined to find the perfect job, and was prepared to move anywhere in the country for the right opportunity.

I found a job advertised for a new pharmacy service that specialised in mental health. I began in my new role as a freshly qualified band 4 pharmacy technician, based in the dispensary. The most rewarding part of the role was having the opportunity to help shape how the service was provided. I jumped at all the training opportunities I could get my hands on, then, six months later, I applied for a band 5 ward-based pharmacy position.

What I do

Since starting in this role, a huge variety of training options and career paths have opened up for me. I have really expanded my knowledge of psychotropic medication, which is important for my role based on the mental health wards. I also really appreciate the flexibility I have in my day-to-day work. Although I have a basic outline of a routine each week, mental health can be an unpredictable area to work in, and I often have to adapt my schedule to meet the needs of the people who use our services. Juggling several different tasks can be a real challenge, but one I really enjoy, and it's what keeps me looking forward to work each morning.

The thing I enjoy most about my role is being able to interact with both patients and ward staff every day

The best bits and challenges

What I enjoy most about my role is being able to interact with both patients and ward staff every day. It is incredibly satisfying to be able to provide advice on the different treatment options available for patients and seeing that advice being implemented. There are always new skills to learn and I don't think a single day has passed where I haven't discovered something new.

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