

"Part of my job is training new technicians. It is a great feeling seeing your trainee progress."

Stephen soon progressed to senior technician once he'd finished his initial training in a decontamination unit and now mentors other technicians.

Stephen Aird

Senior technician, central decontamination unit

Employer or university

NHS Ayrshire and Arran



How I got into the role

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I was at university full-time but wasn't really enjoying it, so I applied for the position of trainee technician in the central decontamination unit at Ayrshire Central Hospital. My training in the department was very good and I was given enough time to learn each process properly and no question was too silly to ask my trainer! After my training, I become a senior technician.

What I do

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I am responsible for processing contaminated and reusable medical devices such as surgical instruments from the moment they come into the unit, through the various phases of decontamination, including the wash area, the inspection, assembly and packing room (IAP) and sterilisation. We are responsible for making sure medical devices are fit for purpose when they leave the unit.

I decided to study towards getting my Institute of Decontamination Sciences Technical Certificate (IDSc). As I started the course, it was clear that a lot of time and effort would be required to pass, but help was always on hand within our department during each module. I had an overwhelming feeling of pride when I saw my results – two distinctions and a credit!

Part of my job is training new technicians. It is a great feeling seeing your trainee progress and my communication skills have definitely improved along the way.

I am now mentoring technicians who are sitting their IDSc certificate, passing on my knowledge and expertise in the decontamination field to help them prepare for the exam.

The best bits and challenges

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I enjoy the different jobs within the unit and that my work is so varied. Sure, we all have our days where we are not in the mood, but not many people can say they do a different job every week.

I also like working as part of a team and learning about new techniques and instruments.

Career plans and top tips for others

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I hope to progress within the department now I've got the IDSc certificate. I also plan to start studying for a foundation degree in decontamination sciences.

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