

"I have always been made to feel very welcome and supported in my new role."

Peggy is a student nursing associate who enjoys bonding with her patients and making them feel at ease before surgery.

Peggy-Jane Murrell

Student nursing associate

Employer or university

Western Sussex Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust



How I got into the apprenticeship

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After working in a care home for nearly three years, I went on to work as healthcare assistant in day surgery at Southlands hospital. I had already achieved a level 3 in health and social care having worked for eight years in community care. I also had my maths and English at level 2.

After I had been working in the department for a year the nursing associate role became available in the trust. I discussed it with my manager and the department agreed that the nurse associate role could be accommodated in Day Surgery. I applied for it, went for an interview in the trust, followed by another interview in the University and got accepted onto the apprenticeship. The department support me by giving me time off for University and giving me learning opportunities whilst I am at work. My qualification is paid for by the trust from the apprentice levy.

What I do

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I work in the ophthalmology unit at Southlands hospital at the moment so I lay up trolleys so they are ready for operations, pass surgical instruments to the surgeon whilst I am training, check patients in, ensuring that the safety check is undertaken and that paperwork is completed. I will clean the hand pieces used for cataracts operations and work where is needed.

The best bits and challenges

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I like hearing the patients' stories and am gratified when they comment on my smile or making them feel at ease as I feel this is most important for surgery. I enjoy the flexibility of the nursing associate role now that I can lay up trolleys and free up the nurses so they can prepare equipment or attend the safety huddle which involves the multi-disciplinary team doing the handover of information and events.

I feel like a useful member of the team. I have always been made to feel very welcome and supported in my new role and people seem interested in my progression throughout the journey.

Life outside work

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I really like walking which I do every week. It keeps me fit and is good for all-round mental health. I love spending time at home with my cats and enjoying fresh air in the garden. I spend time with friends when I can even if it's for a quick chat and coffee.

I play a word game on my phone; enjoy TV programmes like University Challenge and Mastermind – any quiz show really. Although it's rare that I know the answers, I have a thirst for knowledge!

Career plans and top tips for others

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The role requires good communication, flexibility and hard work. The three main attributes or qualities that are required for this role are: determination, communication and care.

Get started

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