

"I'm providing a necessary service in this job and serving my local community."

When Covid-19 threatened to affect Martin's future in the aviation industry, he opted to use his skills in the NHS instead. See how he's making a new start at Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services.

Martin Healy

Driver, pathology service

Employer or university

Berkshire and Surrey Pathology Services

Martin Healy, driver, next to trust van

How I got into the role

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For more than 30 years, I worked in various roles at Heathrow Airport. With Covid-19 severely affecting the air industry, I recognised early on that it was time to re-evaluate my career. After a lot of thought, I took the severance package on offer and saw it as an opportunity to do something different.

Ashford and St Peter's Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust is my local trust, so I looked on the [NHS Jobs website](#) ^[1] to look for vacancies. I was able to do a search and save my application form for other roles too. Also, I'd seen the NHS vans around locally and thought "I could do that!"

My application was successful and I recently started work as a driver for the pathology service 'bank'.

What I do

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I'm responsible for driving to a group of GP surgeries to collect blood and pathology samples for testing back at Ashford Hospital. I sometimes deliver supplies to the surgeries too – things like masks and specimen containers.

I had a week of training to get to know the various routes and where the locations of the various surgeries are. It felt a bit daunting at first, but I nailed it quickly and was doing the job on my own by the second week.

I go to one group of surgeries in the mornings, and another in the afternoons.

The best bits and challenges

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I love meeting different people so I'm enjoying getting to know the different surgery staff.

I'm my own boss once I'm out on the road and can manage my own time. For example, I might need a ten-minute stop at one surgery while I wait for a final sample, but I can catch up at the next stop. It all works out and I'm there to help!

I'm providing a necessary service in this job and serving my local community. It's given me a different outlook, having done shift work for 30 years.

The traffic is a challenge - Chiswick High Road is a nightmare! - but that's always going to be a headache.

Life outside work

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My favourite hobby is spending time with family and friends. Our dog Kizzy needs lots of walks and I enjoy gardening and family trips away.

Covid-19 has obviously restricted things. But now I'm not working shifts, I'm looking forward to having more time for voluntary work and making a difference locally – perhaps through the St Vincent de Paul Society at our church or supporting people leaving the local prison while they get back on their feet.

Career plans and top tips for others

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I'd like to get a permanent job again at some point, but this is a great start.

I've landed on my feet with this role and I feel like a new person! I have a stronger sense of purpose and feel proud to be working for the NHS and doing my bit.

I know it's hard, but if your circumstances have changed, take a leap of faith and try something different. You never know, you might enjoy it!

The NHS is your local employer so it's worth seeing what opportunities there are.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/wider-healthcare-team/roles-wider-healthcare-team/support-services/driver/real-life-story-martin-healy>

Links

[1] <https://www.jobs.nhs.uk/>