

“I have a family history of breast cancer so it’s wonderful to be working in a profession that’s been proven to make an impact on breast cancer mortality.”

Alice applied for a trainee assistant practitioner back in 2018, after quickly falling in love with the role, she went to university to study to become a diagnostic radiographer.

Alice Mazarot

Mammographer

Salary range

Band 6



How I got into the role?

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There is a history of breast cancer in my family. My personal history with breast cancer inspired me to work in the field. My mother was treated by my department before I started working here, and it’s a privilege to work alongside the team that played such a huge role in her treatment and recovery.

I first saw a job for a trainee assistant practitioner in Colchester's breast unit back in 2018 but I trained at St Georges Hospital in London and The Jarvis Centre in Guildford. After

my training, which took about nine months, I fell in love with the profession immediately and knew that breast imaging services was where I wanted to work. I was very lucky that my employer supported by changing my contract so I could go to university to train as a diagnostic radiographer. I was 25 at the time.

I graduated in September 2022, and started my postgraduate certificate in mammography in November 2022. By March 2023, I was qualified mammographer. My colleagues have always been a huge inspiration to me and I'm very lucky to work in a department with mammographers who are always willing to share their knowledge and experience. It's wonderful to be now working in a profession that's proven to make an impact on saving the lives of people diagnosed with breast cancer.

What I do

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What I do in a day depends on where I'm working I might be in a mobile unit where we'll see around 50 clients for routine screening appointments.

If I'm working at the hospital, we might be running a Rapid Diagnostic clinic for people who have been referred from their GP due to them having symptoms. We also run clinics for people who need to be rescreened, have a family history of breast cancer or are at high risk.

I think there's a misconception that mammography can be monotonous, but this is not the case. Every day is different, and I get to meet some amazing, inspiring people. We're also given lots of opportunity to continue our professional development and advance our practice

Career plans and top tips for others

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You can go straight to university to study for a radiography degree but you may also want to think about getting a level 4 qualification like I did as an assistant practitioner. Not only did it get me to university, but it also gave me a solid clinical background and led to my postgrad.

In the future, I'd love to work as an interventional mammographer, this is an additional post-graduate training course on top of the postgraduate certificate we already hold

which allows radiographers to undertake x-ray-guided interventional procedures such as biopsies using our mammography equipment, it's such a good way of advancing our clinical practice! The ultimate goal is to get a master's degree in mammography.

Anyone interested in mammography I would absolutely encourage to pursue it. Our job has a direct impact on breast cancer mortality which is an absolute privilege to be a part of! We use some of the newest and most advanced technology such as 3D mammograms and contrast mammography. We also get the opportunity to travel to conferences. I visited a conference in Glasgow earlier this year, and network with some of the most knowledgeable breast practitioners in the UK

Life outside work

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One of the great things about my job is that we don't tend to work anti-social hours, such as a night shifts and weekends, so we get to maintain a healthy work-life balance easily.

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