

“I am very proud of my passing my qualification. I can now work in a role that makes such a difference to people.”

After working in customer service positions and administrative roles in the NHS, Alexandra decided that she wanted a more patient-facing role. Hear about how her transferable skills helped her in mammography.

Alexandra Rodgers

Assistant practitioner



- **How I got into the role?**

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I have several family members who have had cancer and so I was keen to try and be a part of helping diagnose and help where I can.

I applied for the job, got the interview and got offered the job as an apprentice. I have a degree in sociology and have worked in schools and other administrative jobs in the NHS, but I always wanted a more patient-facing role. My previous experience working in customer-facing roles gave me the skills and confidence needed to work directly with patients.

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What is a typical day?

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My typical starts with making sure that the mobile unit is clean and ready for appointments. I'll also do quality assurance [1] tests on equipment and set up for the people coming for their appointments.

We normally do 4-6 patients taking it in turns. When checking a patient in, we check their details, and medical history and see if they have any current concerns and I explain the procedure of a mammogram. It's important to always remember every patient is different and the need to adapt to different individuals is very important as everyone has individual needs.

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The best bits and challenges

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Best bits are being able to change your working environment daily, one to one patient contact and promoting a good cause in screening. I enjoy these because I enjoy the changing environment and not going to the same place every day, it is nice [2] to keep it varied while out and about screening. I enjoy patient contact because I like interacting with the public and feeling as though I'm making a difference to individual lives.

I also really enjoyed my apprenticeship. It's a great way of working and learning new skills and gaining a qualification.

Adapting to individual needs can be difficult. Some situations are more difficult than others and come with specific challenges. A language barrier can be difficult for people where English is not their first language. It is sometimes hard to explain the procedure and ensure we have consent to continue which is vital.

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**Career plans
and top tips for
others**

**Expand /
collapse**

I would love to progress to a band 5. I can then work on X-rays with patients with breast cancer symptoms. Not only would it further my career but would also further help patients coming to the department who are currently having treatment/about to have treatment. It would mean a lot to further help their cancer journey.

If mammography is a career you are interested in, you'll need to be positive, confident and have empathy. Walk before you can run, always remember that the training is important because everyone learns differently and there is no 'one way' to take a mammogram. Keep at it though because the rewarding career is worth it.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/healthcare-support-worker/roles-healthcare-support-worker/mammography-associate/alexandra-rodgers>

Links

[1] https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Quality_assurance

[2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#NICE>