

Your Guide to **SWeET** **S**trategic **W**orkforce **E**ducation and **T**raining

This edition of the 'Keeping You Informed' bulletin focusses on the latest intake of Assistant Practitioners as they settle into the role.

Head of Nursing for Medicine and Emergency Care, Rachel Whyman



As Head of Nursing for the Medicine and Emergency care Division, ensuring we have the appropriate staff with the right skills and knowledge to provide safe, quality care and a positive experience for patients and their families in the hospital is a vital element of my role.

Within the division we have been experiencing the same difficulties as trusts across the country regarding the recruitment of registered nurses. The Trust has worked hard to develop teams that meet the needs of our patients, and that may not be the 'traditional' staffing model that has historically been in place on inpatient wards.

We have very recently seen our latest cohort of Assistant Practitioners qualify and they have become essential and highly valued members of our ward teams throughout their training. I'm sure they will only continue to flourish as they settle into their Assistant Practitioner roles. They are having a positive impact on patient experience, contributing to the highly skilled and adaptable workforce within our wards. They have also provided our workforce with a real opportunity for career progression and

personal development. I know the Assistant Practitioners have worked incredibly hard to attain their qualification, and are still continuing to gain skills and knowledge, such as medication administration, that will further enhance their already valuable role in delivering high quality patient care.

I am really proud to congratulate our latest graduates and thank them for all the hard work and commitment they have demonstrated in order to achieve their qualifications.

Natalie Townsend and Jane Brackenberry, Assistant Practitioners

The latest cohort of Assistant Practitioners qualified earlier in 2018, Natalie Townsend is one of those who made the grade. She said: "It's great to have qualified after two years of hard work and it's worth it to now have greater responsibilities with my own bay and patients that are under my care."

Cont'd Overleaf...

Natalie Townsend and Jane Brackenberry, Assistant Practitioners (Cont'd)

“Before beginning my qualification I was a Healthcare Assistant and had already done my NVQ level two and three. I was thinking about doing my nursing qualification but I couldn't afford to give up my job and spend three years in education which was when I found out about the Assistant Practitioner role and the qualification route for that.

“I had an interview in front of a panel at Derby University and Mark West, who was my Matron at the time, wrote a very supportive statement and I was accepted on the course. It was a two year course and I've now got my Foundation Degree which means I can do many of the things a nurse can do, the main exception being signing off on medication.

“For me this has been a fantastic route towards my ambitions of getting a nursing qualification and registration. I've not had to give up work which, as a parent with a mortgage, was a barrier to me taking up nurse training through the traditional route. I can now work towards completing a top up year which could see me become a qualified nurse.

“The best part of being an AP is the added responsibility that comes with it. There is more to the job than in my previous role, I've got skills that have allowed me to develop and progress in my career and I'm thankful that Mark and my current matron Jamie have been able to support me through this.”

Jane Brackenberry (pictured below) also qualified with the group and works on Barnes Ward. She has worked on the ward for 18 years, including 12 years as a band 3 Ward Practitioner, taking on the new role to get back some of the clinical duties that went with the role.



She said: “As a Ward Practitioner I was able to work alongside nurses and help out with the clinical work which I thoroughly enjoyed. Unfortunately the role disappeared a few years ago and I went back to being a Healthcare Assistant, which was fine but meant that a lot of the skills I'd built up weren't being used.

“I was looking for something that could help to bolster my career and I saw the AP role advertised, thinking that it was just what I was looking for. I didn't know what it involved at first and I had to fit in my interview at the University of Derby after a night shift, which wasn't ideal planning, but I got the job and started my training.

“It involved completing a Foundation Degree and I'd never done any outside learning before but it was a fantastic experience and a challenge to fit everything in. We had one University day per week and the Degree was split into six to

eight week modules, all involving a written assignment, exam, presentation or combination of the three. We also did a supplementary module in medicines so I can now do regular tablets and pain relief. That final module was at Chesterfield College.

“I'm still learning now, receiving a lot of support from my colleagues and Matron Julie Dack; there's only so much you can learn in a classroom and there's a lot within the job that comes with

Natalie Townsend and Jane Brackenberry, Assistant Practitioners (Cont'd)

experience. I can now do pretty much everything a nurse can do other than intravenous drugs and some of the meds, I'm doing medicines with supervision at the moment until I've completed a competency pack, so it's very close to the Ward Practitioner role that I loved so much.

"It's great for me as I have my own patients and can support the nurses in some of the things they do. But it's more than that as the nurses also support me, we depend on each other. This is it for me now, I've found the job that's right for me and I'm really happy that the Trust introduced this role as it works well for my colleagues and patients."



Liz Claridge – Clinical Education and Training Sister

"I am very privileged to have been involved in the development of these exceptional members of staff. They have all shown great resilience and determination to succeed on their Foundation Degree and have surpassed all our expectations and for some surprised themselves. The September 2016 Group of Assistant Practitioners have recently all successfully completed their course as well 3 of whom have achieved Distinctions and several have passed with merit. We are very proud of all of our now qualified Assistant Practitioners and feel they are extremely valuable members of our clinical teams.

"This group will graduate in November which is another fantastic occasion for them and underlines what a tremendous achievement this has been for all of them. As a role, it's really taken off and shows that we value our staff to help them in their career progression in a way that makes a difference to them, their colleagues and our patients' experience."

