

Guy's and St Thomas'   
NHS Foundation Trust

# Darren Ash - Learner Case Study

**Success Story:  
Darren Ash**

Darren Ash, 22, completed his 12 month business administration apprenticeship through the Trust's Gateway Academy Apprenticeship programme in June 2017. He had been placed in the Kidney Clinic in Renal Outpatients.

During his apprenticeship, Darren was recognised for his hard work and commitment, and in particular for his outstanding contribution to a team. He was named the South London Apprenticeship Winner at the Health Education England National NHS Celebration Awards in April 2017, a nationally recognised award that celebrates apprentices within the NHS.

He says:

"I was placed in the Kidney Clinic, dealing with patients on the waiting list for a transplant, those dialysing to combat kidney failure, and people hoping to donate their kidney to either their relatives or friends – or a complete stranger in what is called non-directed altruistic kidney donation.

I had worked for BT previously in a call centre and decided to leave that role. I went to my local job centre to enquire about some financial support to allow me to attend interviews, and the advert for this apprenticeship had been left on the printer by another staff member. I applied that day.

I come from a family with a long history of working in Healthcare. My great Nan was a nurse during the Second World War, my Nan was a carer for the elderly with Alzheimer's.

**"I am immensely grateful for the opportunity and what it has allowed me to do. The team at the Education, Training and Development centre and those at Hawk Training will insist it is all down to our own hard work, but none of it would be possible without them. I am so proud to be involved and would recommend this to anybody."**

**Darren Ash - Former Business Administration Apprentice**



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My great aunt used to be a physiotherapist and my mum was an administrative worker in Urology and various other departments here at GSTT. I wanted to follow in their footsteps and do something I could be extremely proud of. There were some nerves going in as I understand the pressures of working in this environment. However, the main feeling was excitement. The best thing about the programme was the support that I received. My managers within Renal, my tutors and the apprenticeship coordinator were there every step of the way. I was lucky in that I didn't have any issues during my programme thanks to good management from the team I was with, but I know the apprenticeship team supported friends of mine when needed and were there every step of the way on our journey.

My experience of being an apprentice was amazing – it exceeded all expectations. I didn't expect to be given such a wealth of opportunity within the Trust through this programme. It allowed me to grow as a person, learn and develop new skills which have helped me massively ever since.

The biggest challenge I faced was dealing with patients going through such difficult health problems, and being able to show empathy whilst also working towards departmental targets. This is something that eventually becomes natural, but is difficult to begin with.

I feel though that I learned a lot about myself as well as the new skills picked up. In terms of what I learned about the job, it helped me to learn about NHS policy, about patient experience, and about the sheer volume of work that goes in to every single thing that is done by a department in the NHS. For me personally, I learned that I could achieve anything I put my mind to. I learned that I can adapt to new situations, settle in to new teams, and work well with people of all ages. The NHS is so brilliantly diverse and I think that is what makes it work so well and why it is something to undoubtedly be proud to be a part of.

In terms of impact, for the Renal department, I think that having me there as an apprentice brought fresh eyes to a job that had been done the same way for a long time. One thing I am very proud of is that I had a big role in creating a new permanent clinic for dialysis patients to bring down waiting times and aid in treatment within the department.

For me, it gave me the confidence that I could achieve anything. Within 18 months I have gone from applying for the apprenticeship, completing the apprenticeship, to securing a team leader role.

The apprenticeship had a huge benefit in terms of career progression. I have now taken over as the Team Leader for the Patient Access Team in Clinical Genetics, which is a band 4 role – I was offered and took this job just four months after finishing my apprenticeship with Renal. I am responsible for a team of six people who look after our reception, our appointments booking and our referrals process. I oversee all of this and assist with the running of each section, whilst being the go to person for urgent queries and requests from clinicians. I am hoping to continue my path up the ladder within the NHS. For the time being I am happy where I am but I am very ambitious and always looking up. Before joining the NHS I didn't know if it was something I wanted to do, but now I can't imagine doing anything else.



**Darren was named the South London Apprenticeship Winner for 'Outstanding Contribution to a Team' in 2017**

