

Mary Seacole Community Pharmacy case study – Shona Jubb (Midlands)

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Dispensary manager/technician, Shona Jubb, has been with Dean & Smedley in Swadlincote, Derbyshire, for 12 years. Shona's manager encouraged her to sign up for the programme because, though she didn't know at the time, she was being lined up for promotion from accredited checking technician to dispensary manager.

"My manager felt the programme would be beneficial for me in my next role and at the time I thought it was a great cpd opportunity," said Shona.

"But going back to studying after more than 10 years was a challenge and I didn't realise quite how much work it was going to be. I had to work hard to retain the information, writing everything down. It took me much longer than I initially allowed for. The pharmacy is a very busy place and although I had every Wednesday afternoon to study, there were times – such as during staff sickness – when I just couldn't afford to take it. It was difficult to claw back the time I missed, especially as assignment deadlines approached.

I was also quite anxious that other people on the programme would be ahead of me, as I was just a technician."

But Shona experienced support and encouragement from other people on the programme, as well as facilitators and her own manager. It made the experience a positive one and the results worth all the hard work.

"The programme gave me confidence in the way I worked, how I dealt with people and actioned things. It made me much more aware of the effect the team had on our patients and specifically how the way I communicated could make positive changes."

Initially lacking confidence, Shona joined the programme feeling intimidated by the calibre of her peers. "I was daunted by the prospect of meeting other students on the programme for the first time. As a technician, alongside pharmacists, I was worried I would be out of my league. But that wasn't the case. We supported and encouraged each other and my contributions were valid.

The programme facilitator explained everyone would have different experiences and viewpoints that were all important. When I realised that I began to trust myself and that's when things really started flowing for me.

My manager was very flexible. When an assignment was due, for instance, he would give me a Wednesday afternoon and Thursday morning to work on it. He gave me advice and suggestions and I was always able to access support on specific study challenges, such as referencing.

It meant I was able to manage my life balance, make time for my family and carry on with my running, while still managing to work and study.”

Shona has been able to put into practise much of what she learned – including the use of charts.

“For instance, I put up a weekly tally chart at the back of the dispensary encouraging the staff to meet Medicine Use Review targets. It developed a positive sense of competition and motivation, and it bonded the team. It may seem like a small thing, but it brought us closer to our targets. We’re a relatively small team and it made a significant difference.

I’ve also encouraged the team to follow good practice outlined in the NHS ‘Hello, my name is...’ campaign, which I had studied during the programme. The seemingly small act of introducing yourself when dealing with patients face to face or on the telephone makes a huge difference to the quality of patient care and the relationship between pharmacy staff and patients.

Overall, I’ve been able to use new tools to work well with my team. Staff morale has improved, the team is happier, there is less friction and we have a smoother way of working.

Being on the Mary Seacole programme was pretty intense and I’m taking a break from study before looking at other opportunities. But, it’s great to consolidate what I’ve learned and to pass that on to my staff so that we can all be a part of improving the patient experience. Although it was hard work it was absolutely worth it. I met great people and learnt so much.”