

T LEVEL HEALTH STUDENT

NATALIA



NHS
University Hospitals
Plymouth
NHS Trust

Natalia is currently studying for a T Level in Health and has just entered her second year at City College Plymouth. We asked Natalia why she opted to study a T Level, how this will help her future career pathway into healthcare and why she chose to join us here at University Hospitals Plymouth for her placement.

Why did you choose to study a T Level at City College Plymouth?

City College had the course that I was looking for! My local sixth forms did not offer the options I wanted in health and social care nor did they specialise in the topics I wanted to study. City College provided me with the course I wanted to study and gave me more freedom and opportunities within the health care environment.

Why did you choose a placement at University Hospitals Plymouth?

I signed up for a placement at UHP because I wanted to gain genuine clinical experience as the ability to do this at my first placement was limited. I thought this placement would help me gain a better understanding of the acute healthcare environment and I especially liked the idea that I would gain proper training and get the chance to use equipment that I was learning about at college. This placement was a great opportunity!

How did you find the application process when applying for a placement at UHP?

In my opinion, the application was very serious. It consisted of us having to write personal statements, having to wait to be accepted for an interview, doing the interview, and then waiting for the results. It seemed very grown up and I believe that this process was a great experience to gain understanding of how serious this was and how, in the future, looking for jobs will be quite similar. It was a process that helped me prepare us for future interviews and personal statements.

How did your prior training at college prepare you for your placement?

We did learn some clinical theory at college by the time I commenced my placement, however as this was earlier on in the course we hadn't had the opportunity to do a lot of hands on learning like using observation machines or practicing manual handling. I did have knowledge about the Healthcare Assistant role and how processes are followed to ensure patient safety which made the UHP training a bit easier.

How did the week of clinical training with us at UHP help prepare you?

The formal training allowed me to gain genuine experience, learning how to manage the equipment, manual handling and supporting patients. It helped me learn how to do things properly and it was really fun! I also learn a lot from other students who had been HCA's in the past and were gaining extra experience. Following the training I felt prepared for any situation to do with patients. I really enjoyed it and it was very helpful!

How did you find your first few weeks at placement?

At first, I was very nervous as I never stepped foot in an actual ward at Derriford, especially a stroke unit, so I was quite scared. However, I was greeted really nicely and put with a HCA who was really lovely and fun. Everyone there was really sweet and helped me with things I didn't understand, teaching me if I wasn't sure of something. They understood very well that I was new, but they didn't underestimate me and gave me opportunities to try things which was really cool as I got to manage equipment that I would of usually just stared at in class. Despite my nervousness, I got quite comfortable with the staff, as well as communicating with patients.



How do you feel now?

I honestly feel very comfortable at placement. My confidence has improved a lot, I don't fear asking for help when I need assistance or when talking to a patient. My confidence in what I am doing at placement has also improved as I now know the place much better and how it works, for example I feel confident in setting up a trolley or getting someone ready for a wash, or even feeling confident in going around Derriford to deliver something or collect something if needed. This could be because I know the staff much more now, but in general my confidence has really improved and I feel comfortable at placement, especially with how I enjoy it.



What will you take away from this experience?

I learnt a lot about the healthcare sector, how it is run and have had first hand experience of providing care. I get time to talk to staff to understand their experience of working in an acute ward which is really helpful in helping me figure out what I want to do in my future. My placement on a neuro ward has also meant I have learnt a lot about strokes and the treatments that are used to help manage patients and their symptoms, and that specific information I wouldn't have learnt at school. Overall, I gained a lot of knowledge and skills from this placement, learning a lot about how it is to be part of the health sector and how things are done.

What was your best bit about being on placement?

For me, I think the best part of placement is being a part of someone's recovery path. Being able to see patients recover and leave the hospital is really rewarding especially if I know I helped in their recovery. The best bit is the gratification I get from simply helping someone get better and being able to be part of the families experience when they are at the patients side when they have got so much better. I also think the best part of placement, is the ability to meet so many people who are all so different, from learning that a patient can speak several languages and has won horse racing competitions, to learning about a HCA who was a waitress in Spain and Greece. The ability of hearing so many stories is so interesting and probably one of my favourite things from my placement.

What will you be doing next?

After I complete my care certificate, I will have finished my placement. This placement has allowed me to gain certain experience that will really help with my personal statements for university as I was able to gain hands on experience and a more advanced understanding of the healthcare setting.

I don't fully know what I want to do for my future career right now however I do have an idea. I would like to do something within mental health, maybe counselling or something similar. With this placement, I have got a better understanding of how hospitals work which has really helped me gain knowledge about possible careers in health. Within the stroke ward, I was able to gain more experience than I had initially thought as strokes impact mental health quite strongly.

Feeling inspired?

If you are currently considering a career in the healthcare sector and are inspired by Natalia's journey please do get in touch. We are passionate about supporting anyone who aspires to work in the healthcare sector and have a range of support options available to achieve your goals.

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