

INSPIRING STORY: MATTHEW CARLISLE

Apprenticeships in Healthcare Science is a regional innovative initiative created by Health Education Yorkshire to encourage NHS Trusts to use Apprenticeships as a way to develop new roles and to introduce skill mix within a number of different healthcare science disciplines and clinical skills facilities.

Apprentice Matthew Carlisle is one of over 60 apprentices in the region who are working in many wide ranging science roles. Matthew has taken on an Apprenticeship Ambassador role something that HEYH is promoting as a way to both attract future talent into the health sector and market Apprenticeships to managers.

Tell me about yourselves

Q What is your name, age , where do you work what is your job title,

My name is Matthew Carlisle, and I am 23 years old. Currently working as an apprentice in Medical Engineering at the Radiotherapy Technical Services Department in St James Hospital in Leeds.

About The Apprenticeship

Q Which apprenticeship are you doing, When did you start and how long is it ;What attracted you to do an Apprenticeship;

Currently undertaking an Apprenticeship in Medical Engineering. I am training with a hope to become a fully qualified clinical technologist. I aspire to progress up the ranks in my department.

My area of work is very varied in terms of engineering knowledge; I'm working towards strong understanding of mechanical, electronic and computing systems in order to gain the versatility which my area of work requires.

When I left school I wanted to start a career doing something practical. I decided to attend college and after a couple of years, I qualified as a plumber. I knew the next step was to

gain an apprenticeship but at the time they were very few and far between. During my search I called every number in the phone book and signed up to a training provider called JTL. They sent me notifications every time an opportunity came up in my area.

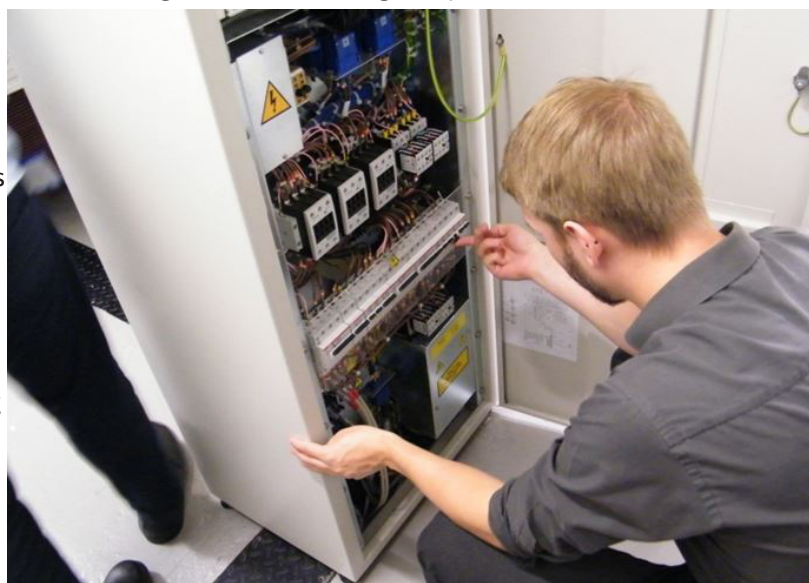
Even with the help of JTL, since completing college, I found very few vacancies and had to work in a healthcare admin role to pay the bills. After a 4 years of working there I finally found a position which seemed really promising- An apprenticeship in medical engineering. I sent in my application and went through various assessment and interview stages and in September 2013, I started my apprenticeship in Medical Engineering.

Q How did you find out about the opportunity. What was the recruitment process and how did you find the recruitment process?

Despite the lack of apprenticeships in my area, JTL were very useful in the way that they sent me a notification every time a position came available.

I got a notification to tell me about the job and I applied for it through the NHS jobs website.

The recruitment process was an 'accelerated recruitment process' meaning it was over 3 days with a hope to start within 2 weeks. It was a big decision for me because during the 4 years in my old work I had become very settled and also worked my way on to a good wage. I knew this job had better prospects, but to take this job was going to completely change my life. I would have to make all new workmates as well as taking a considerable wage drop.



After a week or so thinking about it, I decided it was the right thing to do and I had started by the end of the month.

The recruitment process consisted of an online application, followed by attendance to the hospital for an assessment of practical skills and an assessment of Maths, English and Aptitude. We then came back the next day for a formal interview. I then received a phone call to notify me I had been successful and was required to return the following day with my qualification certificates and to have a background check.

Q What is it like being an apprentice?

Becoming an apprentice is the best decision I ever made for my career. I sometimes find it hard to believe that I am getting paid to do something I enjoy so much. I've learned more in the last year than I could ever have imagined. I have gained skills and learned to do things I never thought I could be capable of.

It is hard work and people do have high expectations of you, but if you keep up with the work and take every opportunity you can to learn, it can be very rewarding.

Q Give an example of what you do are expected to do on a day to day basis. Has this changed since you started ie are you taking on more tasks or able to do more by yourself, have you increased in confidence in certain areas?

In my place of work I am very fortunate in the way that every day provides different experiences. I usually get in early at 7.30 and go help run up our Linear Accelerators, and from that point, anything can happen. One day might be a service, one day might be fault after fault, and the next I might get chance to go work on projects in our mechanical workshop. The one thing that is consistent is that whatever is going on, I need to be there, taking it all in and learning from the experiences.

Since starting a year ago, I am being allowed to get more and more hands on. I am gaining more experience every day. With evidence, comes paperwork. I try to keep an up to date diary of all of my experiences. As well as attending college once a week, I am required to keep up with knowledge based modules for my NVQ. These can be long and tough and I need to work hard to keep up with them, working on them in any spare minute I get.

Q How does the Apprenticeship work i.e do you go to college, How often are you visited in the workplace - How do you find the course?

I go to college once a week and have recently finished my first course of the apprenticeship. I have now started the second course and will be attending for the next few years, depending on how high I decide to go in my qualifications. So far I've found college great, I've learned a lot and enjoyed doing it.

I also get 6 weekly visits from my JTL Assessor. He comes in to do a review of how I'm getting on, ask if I need any help or

support and checks that my employer is treating me correctly. He also checks my NVQ modules while he's here.

Q what support do you get from colleagues?

At work I get incredible support from people at all levels, be it from the most experienced and high level technicians, the management, or the younger staff who have only just qualified themselves. We are offered mentorship from experts in each field of expertise and everyone handles training in a professional and patient manner.

Q Where do you see yourself in 6 years time.

In 6 years time, I will be 29 years old. If all goes to plan with my qualifications I should be into my first year of a HND or Foundation degree. I will have completed my apprenticeship 3 years prior and will hopefully have already have gained my NVQ Level 3 and my HNC. I should by this point be working at Band 4, hoping to progress to band 6 within the next two or three years.



Your role and making a difference

Q Tell me about your ambassador role- i.e what you have done - what do you get out of this?

As an apprentice, I have taken on the responsibility of helping to spread the word of the benefit of apprenticeships, both in general and specifically in the NHS. I am happy to share my experiences with anyone who asks, be this potential apprentices or potential employers of apprentices. I recently attended a conference for the Northern Training Consortium at Sunderland Royal Hospital along with my department's manager Bob Wheller. We delivered a presentation to promote the benefits of taking on apprentices. I told people about my past, my experiences so far and my plans for the future and Bob explained the details around recruitment and costing.

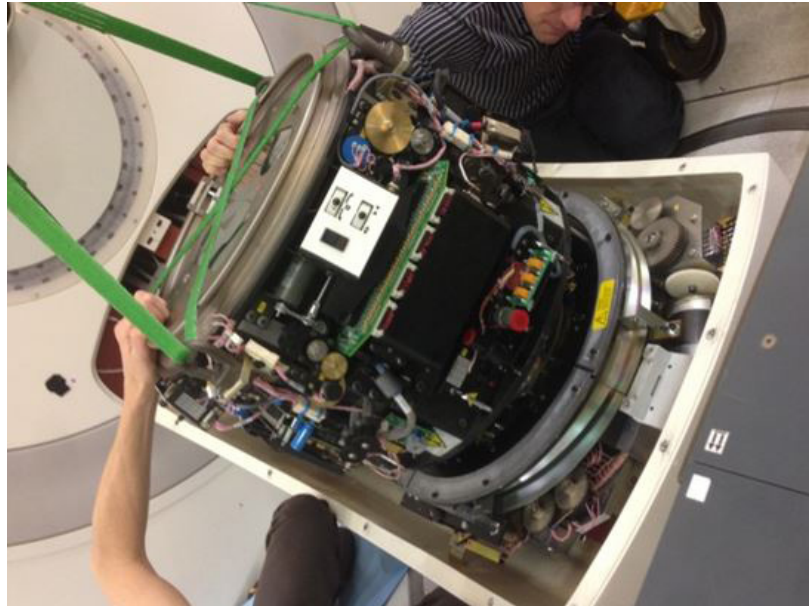
We have also delivered the same presentation to key members of the medical physics department, including the head of Clinical Engineering and head of the Imaging department, in an attempt to keep the ball rolling in terms of recruitment of apprentices within the Leeds Teaching Hospitals trust.

This was a big thing for me to commit to as I have no previous experience of public speaking and could never imagine myself doing this kind of thing before I started the apprenticeship.

Q How does your role impact on patients?

In the short term my impact on patients is minimal. As an apprentice in Radiotherapy Technical Services I am what is called 'supernumerary staff' Which means I am there for a helping hand when needed, but the department could function to full capacity without me. The advantage to this is that I can fully devote myself to my learning and training in order to become a key member of the team when I am to progress onto the next rank.

In the long term my role could impact patients much more. I could potentially work my way up the career ladder into a role where my actions and decisions could directly affect events within the department.



Q Have you any examples of how your work has made a difference to the team workplace or patients.

I think that having apprentices in the department has brought out a passion for mentorship in some people which they perhaps didn't even know they had.

I have helped develop the apprenticeship programme within the department through my feedback. This will be useful when it comes to the department taking on new apprentices in the future.

I helped successfully persuade other departments in the hospital to take on apprentices by talking to them and offering my opinion on the benefits of apprenticeships. I also helped my mentor, Chris obtain his A1 Assessors Level 3 qualification by carrying out tasks and exercises on which he would over look and be assessed by his NVQ assessor/verifier.

Q Do you have anything you would say to anyone thinking of doing a similar apprenticeship?

I would wholeheartedly suggest that anyone who is lucky enough to find an apprenticeship should go for it. Once you have secured yourself an apprenticeship, work as hard as you can. Always be enthusiastic, and always ask questions. The more you put into it, the more you get out. People will notice your efforts and interest, and will take the time to help you achieve your goals.

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