

GRADUATE MANAGEMENT TRAINEE EXPERIENCES

Those of you already engaged with our Graduate Management Trainee Scheme (GMTS) will know that leading into lockdown we had 3 cohorts of trainees hosted across organisations within the South West, with our 2020 cohort only just starting in March. Below we hear from a few of them about their experiences over the past few months and the fantastic support they have received at this challenging time.

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As a 2018 General Management Trainee, I'm in my final months of the Graduate Management Training Scheme (GMTS), currently working across BrisDoc's general practices.

As the pandemic struck, work across the health sector and beyond honed in on the essential. It was incredible to witness how effectively the system could come together and fast-track essential projects to aid the COVID-19 response. For us, this meant delivering urgent primary care services and pausing much routine and project work; my role as project manager inevitably took an entirely new shape. I mostly supported the move to remote working, accruing skills I never thought I would and becoming the IT helpdesk. This gave me a real sense of operational working; doing whatever needs to get done, responding and adapting to challenges as they arise. I was also re-deployed part-time to the Bristol Inner City Primary Care Network, working with colleagues from the Clinical Commissioning Group and other practices to develop an escalation plan, mapping out how partnership and hub working might look.

In these turbulent times, I've drawn on a range of support to maintain my emotional strength. In the first few months, my life – like many others – revolved around Zoom. Virtual afternoon tea with colleagues and weekly check-ins with my tutor brought much-needed social interaction into my workdays. After-hours, there were pub quizzes and virtual meet-ups with friends and family who previously could barely log into their emails. Whilst I enjoyed staying connected, my evenings were beginning to look much like my workdays – sitting at my kitchen table on my laptop – so I started cycling the Bristol bike paths. My two housemates were my mainstay. Living in a cosy flat with no green space, we made the most of the only thing we could control; food. Come Dine With Me was a highlight, although 3 nights running of 3 course meals left us feeling worse for wear...

As lockdown eases, I hope to continue some of these new habits whilst feeling grateful for all that is opening up, so missed in the last few months.



Cecilia Price

2018 General Management Trainee



Sophie Limb

2019 Human Resources Trainee

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Hello, I'm Sophie Limb. I'm a 2019 Human Resources (HR) trainee and my placement is with the Our Dorset Workforce Delivery Team, providing support for the workforce across the NHS system in Dorset. Throughout the pandemic I have been working in the HR Department at Dorset County Hospital, advising staff on the ever-changing guidelines and offering our support when needed through the Coronavirus helpline we set up and manned 7-days a week. In HR we also had the role of coordinating the Trust's COVID-19 staff testing.

Having this helpline that staff and managers could call everyday provided much needed reassurance and ensured consistent messages were received throughout the Trust. We received queries ranging from social distancing, staff testing, symptoms, self-isolation, pregnancy, shielding and other business as usual HR questions. Many have expressed their gratitude for having this helpline available to them during this challenging time and really valued the support.

The pandemic has certainly highlighted how important health and wellbeing is and it's so imperative working in a caring profession to look after yourself so you can provide the best care to others. The theme for this year's Mental Health Awareness Week was kindness and for this, I helped coordinate a 'Box of Kindness' for staff to nominate a colleague that had shown kindness to them. If the nominee's name was picked in a random draw, they would win a wellbeing pack. Reading all the kind things that employees said their colleagues had done really demonstrated that simple acts like providing a listening ear and support, baking a cake for your colleagues, offering a helping hand and thinking of others, to name a few, have such a positive impact on others. The value of kindness has been evident throughout the recent challenges we have faced globally and I feel very fortunate to be part of such a supportive, caring and compassionate team here in HR at Dorset County Hospital.

GMTS EXPERIENCE



Hello, my name is Kathryn. I'm part of the March 2020 cohort on the HR stream, currently in my first placement at the Royal Devon & Exeter NHS Foundation Trust. I was still in my orientation period when lockdown started, and I was sent to work from home while the scheme was paused.

It's been a strange few months, but I feel lucky to have been able to work on various things during the COVID-19 crisis. I've been involved in things such as transferring interviews online, creating a virtual welcome event for the Newly Qualified Nurses and helping out in the hospital's COVID-19 HR hub. This Covid-induced work has helped me feel as though I'm contributing during this time of crisis — despite being brand new to the NHS.

I've also been able to work on a few things I would have been doing originally, such as creating recruitment portal packs to send out to new employees and researching different areas of recruitment (though this has become more post- COVID-19 focused).

I also feel lucky to have had so much support during this peculiar time. My line manager has been great in finding things for me to do from home, and I always know I can ask her anything, no matter how small. I really enjoy the online weekly catch-ups with the South West March 2020 cohort. It's so nice to see everyone's faces, hear what everyone is up to and remember that we're all in the same position.

Since I moved to Exeter for my scheme placement, my housemates have been very supportive. It's been lovely getting to know them so well during lockdown. Two of them have clinical roles in the hospital, so it's been really interesting to see the pandemic from their perspective. Frequent Skype/phone calls with family and friends back home have also been immensely supportive.



Kathryn McIntrye

2020 Human Resources Trainee

As we move through July and lockdown restrictions start to ease, we are pleased to say that our Graduate Management Scheme will restart in September and our trainees will once again pick up their placement roles and education. We will also be working both Nationally and Regionally to recruit into our next cohort, with these trainees starting in March 2021.

If you would like to hear more about becoming a host organisation please do get in touch via leadership.sw@leadershipacademy.nhs.uk and we can provide you with further information.

Supporting Yourself **Through Recovery**



Eloise Taylor