



Case Study 3: School Pupils

NHS Greater Glasgow and Clyde

School Pupil, Bearsden Academy

“I decided to phone Gartnavel Hospital and the Western Infirmary to inquire about work experience because I knew that any work experience in a medical field would be beneficial to my chances of securing a place at university to study medicine.

My work experience in the orthopaedic department was extremely informative and insightful overall. My work experience timetable was divided between the orthopaedic wards and the fracture clinic, which gave me an overview of both the care and treatment of patients and the diagnosis of the injury. The fracture clinic also gave me an insight into how a doctor will deliver the diagnosis to the patient and make sure they are comfortable with their proposed course of treatment.

In the wards, I shadowed nurses as they took blood samples and checked the patient medical records, post and pre-surgery.

The highlight of the three days was the trauma meeting, which involved all nurses and consultants looking over the X-rays of the last seven days,

and reporting on the patient's condition and further treatment. Technological advances meant that each X-ray could be shown on the projector and all of the patient's medical information was stored in a database. This meant the consultants could look at more X-rays and information and treat more people in a shorter space of time.

The work experience reinforced my eagerness to work in medicine, as it showed that medicine could be engaging, challenging and rewarding. It was invaluable in enhancing my personal statement and consequently increasing my application merit for university.”

School Pupil, Lenzie Academy, on her Work Placement at the Royal Infirmary

“Nursing has been an interest of mine for a while. Being a people person and always wanting to care for people from a young age has made me investigate this route and pursue it as far as possible up to now.

When researching university courses and career paths in nursing it was obvious that a small amount of nursing knowledge or experience was helpful for a better chance of getting into certain degrees and courses. I had already done my standard



one week's work experience through the school in fourth year so had to come about this another way and organise it fully by myself. When phoning around hospitals it was evident this wasn't going to be as easy as I first imagined it would be. There were many reasons for refusal including swine flu and not taking any more work experience pupils until 2010, but eventually after a while of trying I was referred to the Learning and Education Services at Stobhill. At last I felt I was getting somewhere.

I was put through to straight away to a helpful person who said the best way of going about this was by filling out an application form so this was sent out to me. I filled that out and sent it back and within two weeks I had a phone call from a staff member who recognised my name because I had met her through my friend's church. She offered to take me on in The Royal Infirmary Orthopaedics Department. My work experience was scheduled for the week beginning 16th of November. As the week approached I was getting anxious yet excited at the same time.



The first morning involved filling out a few important documents and getting to see the layout of the main area. I was based in wards 50, 51 and 52 and I got to meet a few people I would be shadowing over the next few days. That afternoon I was based in ward 51 and everyone was very nice and treated me as an equal even though I wasn't actually allowed to really do much around

the hospital. The shadowing and experiences I heard and saw were just as valuable.

On the Tuesday it was an early morning at the trauma meeting in the Ian Kelly Lecture Theatre. That morning there were very few incidents under discussion. There was a serious hip injury case and some discussion as to what should be done for the patient's surgery. The senior doctors took



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on the students comments and ideas very carefully as they are the ones with the up to date education although the senior doctors are the ones with the experience.

The fracture clinic in the old building was very busy that afternoon so I went and observed all of the patients that were coming in for their casts off or pre-operation checks. I was able to observe and assist by calling patients as this was a very busy afternoon.

Wednesday morning took me back to the fracture clinic as it was a specialised clinic for legs so everyone was coming in for different reasons. It was great to watch and learn from again, and I helped out in every little way I could. The rehabilitation ward in the old building was where I spent my afternoon learning about the much more personal one to one side of nursing, getting to know the patients much more as they are up and about, and preparing to go home after hip replacements, knee injuries and various other orthopaedic related issues.

On Thursday morning I was in wards 50, 51 and 52 following the senior doctors on ward rounds seeing who was in and what had to be done for

each specific patient. Seeing how patient and caring the nurses are with the patients made me realise I am really going to go into the right career! In the afternoon I sat in on the orthopaedics meeting which showed how the surgeons, doctors, nurses and physio's all come together on each patient discussing strategies and ideas they feel would benefit that specific patient.

On Friday I was only working for a half day because I had been in 8:30-5 every day and wasn't normally used to it, although I would have quite happily stayed another week!

I thoroughly enjoyed my work experience placement in The Royal Infirmary and would recommend it to any other school pupil who knows they want a career in medicine, nursing or even in the hospital environment. Everyone was so friendly and didn't treat me like I was a pupil. I was a young adult which made the experience so welcoming and 'real life'. I have known I have wanted to do nursing for years but my placement put a lid on my decision and made me aware of how rewarding it really is. Thankfully the placement also paid off and recently I have received two conditional offers from two of the universities I have applied for as I want to leave after fifth year and get straight into

my training. So who knows, the next time I am returning to the Royal Infirmary it may be as a nursing student or fully trained nurse.

Case Study – NHS Dumfries and Galloway W, sixth year school pupil participating in a one week placement, NHS Dumfries and Galloway

"I had emailed my local hospital asking about work experience. After a few months I received a reply offering me one weeks work experience. I chose to go on the placement as I wanted to research a medical career as I had applied to study medicine and science at university.

The most interesting thing I did during my week at the hospital was watch cataract removal eye surgery. I found this interesting as I had never seen eye surgery before. I also enjoyed going to the renal unit and seeing patients on a one to one basis with medical staff.

Going on ward rounds with doctors was the most challenging thing as I found it difficult to hear patient's stories without feeling like I was intruding. I also found it difficult to hear the more sad and depressing stories of the seriously ill.



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I spent four days at the hospital and I was involved in a variety of activities. I shadowed doctors during ward rounds, watched eye surgery, spent time with a cardiac specialist, had a tour of the hospital labs and spent an afternoon with a cardiac recovery group.

I had already applied for medicine and science courses at university. My time during work experience helped me understand the realities of both careers and helped me see that both can be very interesting and rewarding.

I think having work experience in the hospital is the best way for anyone interested in a medical career to research it, as it lets you observe the work doctors do in a real medical environment.

Spending time in the hospital helped me feel more confident in caring environments and helped me feel more comfortable around the very ill.”

Case Studies – Working in Partnership to Deliver Work Experience

The JET Programme

The JET Programme is a partnership agreement between NHS Lothian and the South Edinburgh Partnership to deliver work-based learning. The purpose of the programme is to provide S4 school pupils with skills to aid their move into employment and promote NHS Lothian as an employer of choice. The student attends every Friday during the academic year of 36 weeks and must be at the work placement for a minimum of 5 hours. The start and finish time of the placement is at the discretion of the department and can be decided in conjunction with the student. The programme is aimed predominantly, but not exclusively at those young people who are in danger of becoming not in education, employment or training, through early intervention.

The programme provides the pupils with the training and qualification they need to start a career and the candidates work towards an SVQ level 2. The aim is that those who have successfully completed their training are better placed for an offer of employment, a modern apprenticeship or entry into further education.

The JET Programme offers students in their fourth year at school, the opportunity to gain real work experience, work towards a nationally recognised vocational qualification, and continue to work towards gaining their standard grades/intermediate exams over the course of a full academic year.

Pupil of the Currie Community High School and JET participant

J completed his JET placement in the Telecommunications Department, where he experienced all aspects of a busy department and worked on the Low Usage Project.

J heard about JET when the JET information assembly took place in his school. “I was really interested and liked the idea of gaining experience in a real job. I picked up an application pack and showed it to my parents and they thought it sounded great too”.

After completing a written application form and being interviewed by JET and school staff, J was offered a place on JET and a placement within NHS Lothian.



J completed his 36-week placement and SVQ Level 2 in Business Administration in May 2009. The placement has helped him to gain in confidence and improve communication skills and this has certainly worked out well for J, who was offered a position as Trainee Telecommunications Support with an NHS contractor. His Telecoms Manager was delighted with his progress so referred him for the job. J has settled in to the role well dealing with a multitude of Telecoms related work.

NHS Western Isles

Pupil, Castlebay School, Isle of Barra

In November 2009, I undertook my sixth year work experience in a busy medical ward in the Western Isles Hospital in Stornoway. Although I was a bit apprehensive at first about having to leave home and going to work in a new place with people I didn't know, I soon realised that I needn't have worried. I was made to feel very welcome by everybody I met, and I thoroughly enjoyed the week.

During the placement, I shadowed nurses in their daily duties around the wards. Patients in the ward were there for a number of different reasons, ranging from dementia to swine flu, while others

were recovering after surgery. I enjoyed speaking to the patients and getting to know them better as the week progressed. I assisted them to get ready in the mornings, and I helped them at meal times.

All the staff on the ward were lovely and I got on with them really well. Even though we were in an environment that was sometimes quite emotionally hard to work in, we had a laugh and tried to look on the bright side. I made lots of new friends during the week, as some of the students were on their Clinical Placement from the Lews Castle College. Many were near my age and when our shifts finished at night, we would go out for something to eat or go to the cinema.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time on work experience and I couldn't believe how fast it went! I was genuinely sad leaving on my last day, especially when all the patients were telling me how thankful they were for my help. Going on a nursing placement for work experience in the Western Isles Hospital made me realise how much I want to be a nurse. I would definitely recommend going on this placement to anyone who wants to pursue a career in nursing and health care.