

Tammy Franco

Former Senior Health Care Assistant Level 3 student with UHL Apprenticeship and Development Centre

Current position: **Healthcare Assistant at LGH**

Working on the front line during Covid-19 has refreshed my skills and made me more confident

Tammy Franco took a Senior Health Care Assistant Level 3 qualification with UHL Apprenticeship and Development Centre. In her current role, Tammy is a Healthcare Assistant at LGH in a Pre-Assessment Clinic and works with patients coming in for elective admission. She prepares patients for their procedure and takes swabs including MRSA and Covid-19 swabs plus other important infection control and patient pre-op preparation. During COVID Tammy's role changed to support undertaking phlebotomy for pre admission patients. As well as interacting directly with patients, Tammy has an administrative role too. We spoke to her about her recent experiences working in the NHS over the pandemic:

What challenges have you faced as a 'key worker' through the current Covid-19 pandemic?

I was moved from my normal clinical role into a different role altogether, so I have faced challenges which have included a change of job role and a change of colleagues.

Personally, I have faced challenges of uncertainty which has made life difficult, but I feel I have coped with all these challenges well.

How have you felt appreciated and supported during this time?

I have been shown great support from my colleagues not just the colleagues I work with daily but from new colleagues I have worked with during the pandemic always checking in on each other and letting me know I have a good support network.

Patients and visitors have also been amazing during this time have mostly shown their gratitude and support passing on their thanks regularly and giving praise for the work we do.

How did your qualification/apprenticeship help prepare you for this current situation?

I found doing the qualification during the pandemic difficult at first as I wasn't sure what support there would be and how it was going to work as I was coming towards my EPA. However, my mentor was very supportive and helped me complete my qualification easily setting up all the things necessary for me to gain my qualification smoothly.

Do you feel there has been an opportunity for learning/professional development during this time of crisis? If so - in what ways have you developed your skills?

Yes, I feel I have learned a lot from this experience. I refreshed skills I haven't used since I completed my care certificate, skills that I have but don't use on a regular basis as they are not need in clinic but are essential to helping on a ward. This gave me great confidence in my role.

What was your own Results Day like?

Results day was a brilliant day; it was a great relief to know the course had been completed and that I had passed (with distinction). I had worked so hard for what felt like a very long time that the release was amazing that it was complete and that I had achieved something I never thought I would.

I celebrated with family at home but informed all my colleagues who had supported me through the learning who was very pleased with my results too.

I received several gifts from the colleagues who had supported me as they know how much work I put into my learning.

How did you feel straight after Results Day?

After results day I thought I wanted to take a break from learning. However, after a couple of weeks I felt a bit lost not having any learning to do. I spoke to my mentor who was happy to help with guidance I received lots of information about other courses and I am currently looking into future progression.

What advice would you give students who are getting their results in August?

Keep learning while you have the bug for it!

With thanks to UHL Apprenticeship and Development Centre and Tammy