

# What our preceptees think

We spoke to Hafsa Sattar a Staff Nurse at the Newsam Centre about her experiences of our preceptorship programme

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## What's your experience of working as a newly qualified nurse?

Initially I was very apprehensive towards the thought of jumping from a student nurse to a newly qualified nurse, however I was lucky enough to be well supported during both my final placements and new post. The support I received helped bridge the gap between student and nurse, making this transition much easier than anticipated.

Working as a newly qualified nurse has proved to be challenging but ultimately a rewarding experience.

## Why did you decide to specialise in mental health

Prior to applying for the course I was undecided about which area to specialise in. The mind always fascinated me, and while studying psychology at A-level this interest continued to grow. I also cared for a family member with mental health problems during this time, and in the end my lived experience became the decider for specialising within this area.

## Why did you decide to stay in Leeds after you qualified?

I did my training in Leeds but did consider going to another area. I did an out of area placement during my training and found that the preceptorship programme in Leeds appeared to be more supportive and structured, as well as the support received in the trust in general.

Although I would have travelled a shorter distance if I worked in another area, I preferred the structure of this trust and support I had received as a student previously.

### **What have you found challenging about your first year as a newly qualified nurse?**

Although I felt my transition from student to staff ran smoothly, I still struggled with being able to delegate tasks and take more of a leadership role initially. As well as this, I felt the pressure of not only having to work within a team, but often having to support and guide team members when co-ordinating shifts or working as the nurse in charge, as opposed to requiring more guidance and direction when working as a student.

### **Do you get support after that happens?**

My preceptor was very supportive as well as other senior staff who gave me constructive criticism, which helped build my confidence and leadership skills. My ward manager was also very supportive, as were the clinical supervisions I had where I could voice my concerns as I progressed.

### **What do you enjoy about your job?**

The thing I enjoy most about my job is when goals or targets are set for patients and they achieve them, such as those who didn't have a routine being able to wake up in the morning without support, or attend for medication without being prompted. Although it doesn't happen daily and happens over time, it always reminds me the importance of our role and remaining consistent yet flexible, patient, and to persevere when things become challenging.

Despite appearing like small targets, they can be life changing for some of our patients and the difference between being in hospital and being discharged. Watching service users grow and progress are the moments which are especially rewarding for me and remind me of why I wanted to become a nurse initially. It is most definitely what I enjoy most about my job.

### **If you could go back in time and give some advice to yourself when you were a student and applying for jobs, what would you say?**

I would advise myself to apply for whatever role interests me. Never think that it is too early to apply or that I am under qualified or don't have experience for the role. I would also tell myself not to feel disheartened if you do not succeed in an interview, as it is a learning curve and still a good experience, and remind myself to take away the positives from the situation. I would also advise to gain feedback if you are unsuccessful, ask for pointers and key things to discuss.