



Londonwide LMCs

The professional voice of London general practice

Apprenticeship update and a first-hand view of what makes it great

My Apprenticeship – Joel Carmody at St Peter's Medical Centre, Harrow

We have all heard the horror stories about general practice on the news. The endless waiting times, the further restrictions on GPs and junior doctors, leading to the juniors's strike action, the constant budget cuts from the Department of Health; this reputation won't exactly find the NHS in The Sunday Times's top 100 companies to work for. All of this would be slightly off-putting for someone to choose as their first workplace, but as I have come to realise the NHS attracts staff that would repel other employers, due to the nature of their convictions to offer quality healthcare in an ever changing society.

I have come to realise that not everyone is purely motivated by money, profit or targets (sorry to tell you CQC), but have no other ulterior motive then simply to help others, to live in a compassionate, caring society that provides for the least, the last and the lost. I came to the conclusion quite early on that I wasn't pushed by making a profit, as my friends drooled over fancy sport cars, or by academic success, to the despair of my teachers. I simply didn't care for what others prioritised in their life, and I knew this would either be a major hindrance to waking up in the morning for work, or for living a life that is true to my own values.

The apprenticeship model attracted me in the sense that I was able to start off my career while further developing my skills. I am treated as an adult with real responsibility for the administration of the practice's patients. From preparing their scripts in the morning, to coding the care they have received in the afternoon I have gradually built up a full picture of general practice. This hybrid I believe is much more in line with the professional development that happens across the whole of public service, especially the skills needed for implementing a full medical service in an era of constant technical innovation and policy changes.

What stands out for me was attending a medical terminology workshop at the LMC building in Tavistock Square and finding myself just as baffled as the practice managers by the medical jargon we came across throughout the day, yet still able to converse with them as like-minded co-workers.

Seeing a fellow apprentice supporting the workshop made me have the sudden realisation 'I've made it, I'm actually in the adult world', I always thought I would be a child looking in.

I hope in the future to take on what I've learned here professionally from simply leaving my desk tidy to multitasking tasks based on importance and impact to patients, but also personally in living a more compassionate life in valuing other people for all that they are, rather than just seeing them as 'patients'. I will be staying on here for now but in the future hope to enter public health. As my manager noticed I'm able to see the bigger picture, I hope to put this to good use to enable us to live in a healthier nation.

Get your practice involved in the apprentice scheme

If you are a practice in North West London and would like to take on an apprentice of your own, funding is still available but interest must be recorded before 31 March 2016. For more information, please contact stran-jay.schloss@lmc.org.uk.