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PRESS RELEASE

Job hunters flood hospital for healthcare support worker posts

Job hunters from florists to forensic scientists have flooded The Dudley Group with applications to join a novice training programme to clinch a contract as a healthcare support worker.

More than 300 people applied for a place on the Healthcare Support Training Programme which could lead to them securing one of the 15 positions vacant at the Trust.

The novice programme gives people with no previous caring experience the chance to learn the basics of nursing care and the clinical skills needed for the job of healthcare support worker.

“We introduced the programme to address the problem of recruiting skilled clinical support workers into the Trust,” said Maggie Lewis, Professional Development Lead for Clinical Support Staff, who designed the training programme.

“We wanted to address the problem of poor quality applicants who previously applied for support worker roles,” she added.

“We see it as a way of ‘growing our own’ and ensuring we give novices a thorough grounding in clinical skills before they are offered a permanent contract.”

Training begins with an induction week where novices learn the fundamentals of nursing care including bed bathing, pressure sores, nutrition and feeding, patients’ rights, dignity in death and nursing patients who experience pain.

Entrants are supervised by a registered nurse and they are assigned a band three support worker as a “buddy”. They are also monitored by an assessor while they achieve the required set of clinical skills.

Novices are only placed in clinical areas where there are vacancies to enable the Trust to offer all successful placements a substantive contract at the end of their fixed term contract.

“We have been overwhelmed with enquires for the programme and pleasantly surprised by its popularity, and by the quality of the people applying for a place,” said Director of Nursing Denise McMahon.

“It has proved to be a very successful way of recruiting quality support workers who have the potential to progress to a nursing degree and it is now part of the Trust’s annual Workforce Plan.”

More than 70 people have been awarded contracts since the programme launched in November 2010.

One of the first eight novices has completed her healthcare support worker training and is now on a Learning, Education and Progression (LEaP) course preparing for her nursing degree.

Nicola Farnell, 26, gave up her job as a special constable with Staffordshire Police to join the novice programme to follow her vocation into nursing.

“I’ve always enjoyed helping people and the Dudley programme is an excellent way of getting into nursing because you don’t need any qualifications or experience,” said Nicola.

A healthcare support worker on a ward that looks after the Ear Nose and Throat and Urology patients, Nicola hopes to specialise in general nursing or midwifery once she has gained her nursing degree.

The Dudley Group recruits to the novice programme three times a year; short listing for the current 15 coveted places is about to begin.

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For more information, please call Jackie Dietrich, Communications and Engagement Officer, The Dudley Group NHS Foundation Trust on (01384) 456111 extension 1419.