

Royal London Hospital's Story

the
switch

Work Experience



"I didn't do Work Experience when I was at Morpeth School, so it's been rewarding to give back to the school that gave me so much by offering these placements." – Anhar, Royal London Hospital

When Anhar studied at Morpeth School in Tower Hamlets, the lack of a sixth form limited his opportunities. Now a Service Manager in the NHS, he is committed to offering young people the chance to explore careers in healthcare, including those from his old school.

In February 2025, he hosted Year 13 students from Morpeth School for Work Experience through The Switch. In March, he extended the offer to Year 10 students from Mulberry Stepney Green Maths, Computing and Science College. He also regularly participates in the WorkPath apprenticeship scheme, offering four-month paid placements that provide valuable experience and a clear career pathway into one of London's largest hospitals.

"This week, we've gained the skills we need to succeed within the NHS. This placement has helped me see a career pathway for myself in the NHS." – Ayesha, Morpeth School

Year 13 students Ayesha and Safia* joined Anhar's team at Royal London Hospital for a hands-on week in the Outpatient Therapies Service. They took on administrative roles, supporting both the reception team and back-office operations. They were introduced to EMIS and CRS, the NHS's main healthcare management and booking systems, and spent time shadowing and supporting the Service Delivery Manager to understand how the service runs behind the scenes.

The placement gave them valuable insight into how a busy hospital department operates and sparked a genuine interest in a career within the NHS.

"I wasn't sure if I wanted to go to uni or do an internship, but the NHS apprenticeship feels like a third pathway that's opened up for me." – Safia, Morpeth School

The placement came at an important time in the students' education, as they make big decisions about their next steps. While studying BTEC Business Studies had sparked an interest in administration, the placement helped them see how their skills could be applied in a healthcare setting, giving them clarity and confidence that their classroom learning could translate into a career.

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Through a mix of independent tasks, shadowing, and building essential workplace skills like communication and organisation, the experience helped them feel more prepared for life after sixth form and opened up a new, meaningful career pathway.

"I knew I would do administration, but I didn't know I could do it within the NHS because I associated it with healthcare rather than business. It's been eye-opening to see the business side of the hospital and know that the course I'm doing can get me to where I want to be, but within the NHS." – Ayesha

For Ayesha and Safia, the placement sparked a newfound respect for the NHS. Working in Anhar's team opened their eyes to a side of the service they'd never seen before. It was a powerful reminder that the NHS isn't just made up of doctors and nurses; it's supported by a whole network of people working behind the scenes to keep things running.

"Very few people truly understand what goes on behind the scenes in the NHS, it's so impressive. If back-office staff weren't here, the NHS wouldn't be able to do what it does. They are the backbone of the service" – Safia

Anhar believes that Work Experience can be a strategic way of attracting top talent. When it comes time to recruit for a new role, Anhar knows he has a pool of candidates to choose from: individuals already familiar with the hospital's systems, who have the appropriate skills, and who he knows reflect the workplace's values.

"The placements have helped me create a talent pool of skilled workers which I can tap into whenever I have a live vacancy. The students get good experience, learn new skills, and receive a good reference from us. I'm constantly writing references for people who I've hosted for Work Experience – it's the least I can do for what they've done for us."

The majority of students Anhar hosts through the NHS apprenticeship have gone on to work within the NHS, illustrating the quality of the talent that is created during Work Experience.

"Pretty much everyone I've hosted for an apprenticeship has secured a permanent job within Barts NHS Health Trust or within the NHS more widely."

Anhar's approach also helps address a broader objective within Barts NHS Health Trust: to recruit more local talent.

"One of our objectives within the Trust is to recruit more from the local community, especially for clinical roles, since most of our clinicians come from outside the borough. When we bring in Work Experience students, we make sure they're exposed to the clinical side of the industry to help spark an interest."

For Anhar, recruiting locally makes a real difference to the quality of care patients receive. When staff share the same language or cultural background as their patients, it helps build trust and a sense of safety. Local recruitment doesn't just fill roles, it leads to stronger, more personal care.

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"When a patient from the local community is cared for by someone who's also local and speaks the same language, any worries they had before coming in disappear. There's a feeling of familiarity, which makes a big difference.

If you work in the community you serve, you're more likely to go that extra mile. You know that your family or friends might be treated [at Royal London] one day, and you want them to have a good experience, so you make sure all patients do."

This was something the students picked up on throughout their placement. They felt the kindness, support, and care shown by everyone they worked with. Whether they were asking for help with a complex system or chatting with staff who started out doing Work Experience, Ayesha and Safia felt welcomed, included, and respected by everyone on Anhar's team.

"It didn't feel like we were younger than everyone else. We were made to feel on the same level as them. We felt equal and that we were all working together towards the same goal." - Ayesha

For these students, Work Experience was more than just a week in the workplace - it was a turning point. It introduced them to a side of the NHS they hadn't previously considered and gave them valuable insight into how they might fit into it.

The placement helped build their confidence, develop practical skills, and clarify their next steps. Most importantly, it sparked a genuine interest in pursuing careers in the NHS through a business and management route; something they may never have discovered without this opportunity.

By offering Work Experience placements to local students, Anhar is giving young people from Tower Hamlets the kind of opportunity he didn't have growing up. As he reflects on his management career, he says:

"When I first became a Service Manager, back in 2017, I was one of the few Bengali male managers from Tower Hamlets. Now, because of more local recruitment and Work Experience opportunities, it's a lot more common to see people like me in my position."

Now as a Service Manager, Anhar is not just opening the door; he's actively creating space at the table for the next generation to step into roles like his within a highly sought-after and dynamic industry.

Find out more about The Switch's Work Experience programme:

theswitch.org/employers/host-a-work-experience-student/

*Student names have been changed.

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