

staff in the SPOT light

This month:
JADE HARRIS
trainee pharmacy technician
Wilkinson Pharmacy
Manchester

Jade Harris is always looking out for the people in her community, whether she's working in the pharmacy or on her own time. **Millie Browning** finds out more



Jade Harris cites her Gran as her inspiration to start a career in pharmacy.

"It's all for my Gran really," says Jade Harris when asked why she chose a career in pharmacy. "When I was younger, I would look after her as she suffered from multiple strokes. I helped out to make sure she took her medications. Seeing how dependent she was on the meds, and how they affect her quality of life, made me develop a real interest in medication.

"When my Gran moved into a care home, I started working there, just being a support system for people really. Speaking to them every five minutes just seemed to brighten their day and I realised I had a passion for caring for people and wanted to use that with

my interest in medicines. So I started working in pharmacy when I was 18 years old, and I've been here for about five years."

Woman on a mission

Jade's days are jammed pack, just the way she likes them. "I do the dispensing, blister packs and I speak with customers," she explains. "I am currently the senior staff at my pharmacy, so I go to other branches to help out if they need it. I also do the Healthy Living displays and the needle and Covid-19 vaccination paperwork. I like to have a lot of jobs; it makes the day go quickly and keeps me busy. It's also great for giving me more

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experience and improving my learning."

During the pandemic, Jade was aware of reports that domestic violence was increasing, so made it her mission to make the pharmacy a safe space for anyone who needed it. "Obviously men and women can be victims of abuse and if someone's stuck in the house with their abuser for that long it can be really hard," she explains. "I put up signs in the pharmacy with numbers to ring and that say they can always come and talk to us.

"It does spark conversations; it raises customers awareness about different situations, I think. It makes them keep an eye on their neighbours where they may not have before so if they feel like they notice a change in somebody, they do something about it."

Taking the time

Jade's favourite part of the job is getting to meet new people and help them as much as she can. "It's a community pharmacy," she says. "Most of the time the people that come in are the same people that collect their prescriptions every month or every week, so you do create a bond. You find out a lot about the person and their family and they do start to confide in you.

"Especially with methadone patients who we see every day, you can tell if something is upsetting them. For example, I had a patient who was usually really bubbly but came in a couple of times seeming really down, so I asked him if he was okay.

"He told me that his flatmate was bullying him and had been stealing his methadone and other medications as well. With his permission, I involved safeguarding to organise a meeting and he was taken away from that flat and put into different accommodation. He's so much happier again now."

Jade also goes out of her way to help elderly patients, whether she's on the clock or not. "I was going into the post office and I found a lady in there who's a customer of the pharmacy," she explains. "She really likes to be independent and so walked to the post office but when I found her, she looked like she wasn't feeling too well and had to sit down. I offered to drive

her home and when we got there, there was a whole search party out looking for her! Her son was so grateful that I'd been there, but I was just doing my job."

High aspirations

"I've done my dispenser and shop assistant training," says Jade. "I also always have an eye on CPPE and do a lot of the modules on there, any of the new courses that come about. I really like to learn more as I think it gives me more experience when working with patients."

Currently, Jade is over halfway through her pharmacy technician course and is due to finish in December 2022. "I want to do the technician training as I think in the future a lot of the services that we'll be offering – like flu vaccination and EHC – will be down to the technicians," she says. "Especially after Covid-19, there's new roles and pressure within the industry – it's good that we're getting recognition and we can take the stress off the doctors. It's nice that there is trust in us to support patients. I think that soon technicians will be able to do a lot more work, so I'd love to be able to take part."

The TM team wish her the best of luck for the future!

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