

staff in the SPOT light

This month:
LORAIN WEBSTER
customer adviser,
Boots, Maidstone,
King Street

Lorraine Webster cites helping people as the driving force behind her career in pharmacy. **Millie Browning** finds out more

“You can hear me before you see me,” laughs counter assistant, Lorraine Webster. “That’s the one thing everyone knows about me and that’s alright! At least I’m known for something!” Known for slightly more than that, Lorraine is a familiar face at Boots having worked there for the past 21 years.

“I started out in London in 2001, I worked in Surrey Quays then I went to Piccadilly. When I had my little girl and wanted to do certain hours, they transferred me to Carnaby Street who had the hours to accommodate me,” she explains. “Then eventually we wanted to move to Maidstone, so I came to our Fremlin Walk store and then I ended up here [Boots Maidstone King Street] in December 2018!”

A foray into pharmacy wasn’t always what she had imagined for her career

thing?! So, I never wanted to make the switch.

“Then my manager, she called me in one day and I thought, ‘what have I done now!’ and she came in and said ‘how do you feel about going into pharmacy?’ And I explained that I don’t have the confidence and I’m a worrier and she said how about you give it a try’ and see how you feel’. So, I did it and I loved it! I did my healthcare assistant training and here I am!

“It’s a joy, I walk down the street and people know me by name. They come in and if they don’t see me, they say, I asked for you the other day! It makes me feel like at least I’m doing something for the community.”

Through the ups and downs

Lorraine joined the pharmacy in 2019 and it’s no secret what happened

Even though she hadn’t been working in the pharmacy long, like many others, Lorraine also saw a significant change in the way patients used the services.

“Where they can’t see doctors, they expect so much more from you,” she explains. “You do have people who are in a bad mood, and they take it out on you. That’s one of the things working in pharmacy, you’ve got to learn to be patient and understanding and breathe. Just breathe and think, they’re probably having a bad day. It’s not how I would have dealt with it, but that’s their way of dealing and just rise above.

“The girls in the team are brilliant too. When they put me on pharmacy, I said to them I must apologise in advance because I’m going to be asking questions over and over and they said no problem! I wouldn’t be where I am without them. They’re lovely and we are all a good team. We pull together and look out for each other. We joke around too. There’s one pharmacy assistant, Katie, and she’s my work daughter. I always go home and say I have two kids now!”

A helping hand

Helping people however she can is Lorraine’s driving force. “I know I can’t make everyone happy,” she says. “No matter how hard I try. But if I make at least one, then it’s happy days for me.”

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but when approached by her manager she decided to give it a go. “I’m a little perfectionist,” she laughs. “So, if I’m going to do it, it’s all or nothing. I worry. I’ll go to bed and think, did I give that person the right

the following year. “I worked all through [the pandemic],” she says. “They were offering furlough and I said no because I can’t keep still! I’m happiest when I’m doing something.”



Lorraine has been working for Boots for 21 years, but only transferred to the pharmacy team four years ago.

One story where she felt she’d recently made a difference really stuck out. There was a customer “who’d been trying to get pregnant. She’d come in every day and say, ‘which pregnancy test should I take?’ I told her that there’s not a special one – if you just want to know if you’re pregnant, any will do! And then I said you know while you’re here have you tried out fertility tablets, you can take them if you’re trying for a baby”.

“Every time she used to go away and come back and tell me I’m not [pregnant]. I tried to offer her advice and encourage her as much as possible and then one day she came back and she said, ‘I am!’ and I said, ‘Are you definitely, doctor confirmed and all?’ And she said yes! She came in last Monday

with her baby boy! It’s just one of those things. When I have a bad day, I say why do I do what I do? But then something like that happens and I know.”

Who knows what the future holds?

When asked what’s next for her, Lorraine is leaving her future in pharmacy open ended.

“I love what I do. I don’t know what the future will bring for me in pharmacy. Because who does know? I never thought I’d be here! I might change my mind eventually and go up further to help in the dispensary. But at the moment, I’m happy doing what I do; helping people and having them come back in and saying thank you because they’ve seen a difference, it really makes it all worthwhile.”