

staff in the SPOT light

This month:
KIERA DWYER
pharmacy technician
Sheppards Pharmacy
Nelson

Pharmacy technician, **Kiera Dwyer**, is keen to learn as much as she can to help her community. **Millie Browning** finds out more



Pharmacy technician, Kiera Dwyer, recently won apprentice of the year at the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru.

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them to the GP who then ended up prescribing them antibiotics.”

The joy of learning

Kiera’s confidence in such situations comes from a fountain of knowledge that she possesses and strives to improve on every day. “I think it’s important to continue to improve your skills and knowledge”, she says, “because then you have the latest up-to-date information, which you can then use with your clinical thinking when it comes to making decisions to help patients”.

Kiera puts this knowledge to good use when it comes to getting involved with the pharmacy’s services, especially the blood pressure services. “We want to get as accurate a reading as possible, so I would just make sure they sit down and explain the process to them,” she explains. “I normally like to do three readings so I can get an average and then discuss their results with them.

“Normally, I would also show the pharmacist the result, especially if it might be a little high or low. We ask them to come back in a couple of days or, if it’s really high, we may sometimes refer them directly to the GP.”

Making a difference

Kiera is also currently involved in training for other clinical services and is keen to get started, using health awareness campaigns to promote these to customers where she can. One that recently comes to mind was a Stoptober success. “There was one lady who came in for a different inhaler for her asthma, but she also smoked which was obviously making it worse. I explained this to her and then told her about the 12-week programme and gave her a leaflet.

“She went home and decided she wanted to try to quit. I’m not qualified at the moment, so I couldn’t conduct the service, but I explained the process and what her options were. She conducted weekly appointments for four weeks, but she came in throughout the entire process.”

Kiera explains that there was a moment when it looked as if the patient might stop the programme, as she was struggling, but after chatting with her, she made the decision to carry on. “She hasn’t had a cigarette for a few weeks now – so that was a pretty successful result, all coming from the Stoptober campaign!” Kiera adds.

The apprentice

In October 2022, Kiera was named Apprentice of the Year at the Apprenticeship Awards Cymru which recognise the outstanding achievements of employers, apprentices and work-based learning practitioners.

Due to Covid-19, the awards were initially going to be virtual, but the organisers made the last-minute decision to host an in-person event.

“They invited me down to the head office and they had a bit of a spread,” explains Kiera who was joined by several co-workers, past and present, family and even the pharmacy dean. “It was a lovely atmosphere just to have everyone together and I felt overjoyed even with that, no matter what the outcome was. When they said I’d won, I was flabbergasted! I was on cloud nine, and I didn’t really know what to say, I was just speechless for the entire night, which is a rarity for me!”

For Kiera, however, helping her patients is plenty reward in itself. “Each patient is different,” she says. “Where I might be able to help one patient by just sitting down and having a talk, with another patient I may have to adapt the way I provide the same information even by just writing it down or using visual aids.

“I have to adapt to make sure they have a full understanding to protect their patient safety. But patients do come in quite frequently and thank us as a team, which I think is more than enough of a reward for us. I really do enjoy it.”

Kiera Dwyer had always wanted a job in healthcare, finding the topic as a whole extremely interesting. “Socially, I enjoy working with people, whether it’s as part of a team or helping people,” she explains. “Pharmacy was the best path for me to be able to combine all of those interests of mine.”

Kiera has worked for various branches of Sheppards Pharmacy for the past six years, progressing through her training before qualifying as a pharmacy technician last December. Now, in her day-to-day role at Sheppards Pharmacy in Nelson, Wales, she dispenses scripts, answers the phones and

takes in repeat prescription requests.

One of Kiera’s key roles is relieving pressure on the pharmacist. “Instead of referring to the pharmacist, staff can refer some patients to me so I can have a look at them,” she says. In one instance, a patient came into the pharmacy with a cut that looked as if it could be infected. “Instead of referring them to the pharmacist who would then have to stop what they were doing, whether it was checking or maybe providing other services, I was able to have a look,” Kiera explains. “Using the WWHAM questions I was able to determine that it was infected. So, I signposted