

**Matthew Miles - Data Expert Apprentice at Guy's and St Thomas' NHS Foundation Trust**  
**Grade: Distinction**



### What led you to do an apprenticeship?

Whilst I am an experienced Data Analyst, with several years of practical work under my belt, I was lacking in academic and vocational qualifications to confirm my skills.

### What goal were you trying to achieve?

I wanted to balance my experience against my skills, whilst also developing new areas of practice by learning new techniques and analytical languages. I am a driven and ambitious individual, and career planning is something which is key to my professional development. I knew that obtaining qualifications to demonstrate my skills was pivotal to progressing in my career – especially at the level I currently work at.

### How did you find your apprenticeship journey?

Overall, I was very pleased by the support and guidance provided by both the training provider as well as the apprenticeship team within the Trust.

On the couple of occasions where I felt more support was required, I raised this and my needs were met. I was particularly happy with the number of additional resources made available to me as an apprentice – for example, access to Pluralsight to learn online, Aptem to record my work, etc. Learning over the course of the pandemic was made very easy – everything was transitioned online quickly, including workshops and other face to face meetings.

### How did the Apprenticeship blend learning with your role?

This was key. There is no point learning but not putting new skills into practice. I had to complete a portfolio of 'real-life' work to submit at the end of the programme, and being able to use new skills such as R and Python in my day to day work was both refreshing, as well as allowing me to enhance the offering of products to my customers.

### How were you supported during your apprenticeship?

I had as much support as I needed. One of the things I most liked about the programme was that the level and detail of the support was tailored to the individual learner – there was no one size fits all approach. As I had pre-existing skills in some of the subject areas, I was not taught to “suck eggs”, but where new skills were being learned, I could spend more time being supported with these. Exactly how a course should run!

### How did you manage your workload and the apprenticeship?

I am fortunate that I have the ability to schedule and prioritise my own workload. However, having agreement and understanding from my line manager (especially around the 20% OTJ hours) was particularly helpful. This specifically gave me time to complete portfolio work, revise for exams, or just do wider background reading without it affecting my ability to complete my day-to-day work.

### Having completed the apprenticeship, what impact has it had on you professionally and personally?

Firstly, it has allowed me to gain professional recognition for my skills and experience – I was fortunate to gain a distinction as my final result. The programme allowed me to gain recognition as a Registered IT Technician (RITTech) with BCS; Advanced Practitioner status from the Federation for Informatics Professionals in Health & Social Care (FEDIPAdvPra) as well as contributing to becoming a Chartered IT Professional with the BCS (CITP).

Personally, the programme has given me the confidence to continue my academic studies alongside my work and has given me a focus towards career progression and planning where I want to continue my career in terms of profession.

### From undertaking the apprenticeship what skills and knowledge did you take away that you have implemented into your everyday work

The programme helped me to promote independence for end users by encouraging them to undertake first level analysis of their data within the reports and dashboards I create. It's all about telling a story with the data... a successful piece of work prompts end users to ask further questions of their data and help to understand the 'why' of the data; as well as the 'what comes next? How can we improve this?'

### What was the best experience during your apprenticeship?

The best experience was the feeling of having passed both my exams! It's been quite a while since I undertook any academic exams, and so I was a bit apprehensive! My course tutor and coach helped me prepare well and being able to see the result as soon as you finish the exam is a wonderful feeling!

### What are five words or phrases that sum up your learner journey?

Refreshing; challenging; rewarding; worthwhile; inspiring.

### What are the main things you have achieved through this Apprenticeship?

- 1) Recognition of existing skills and experience.
- 2) Learning new areas of practice which the NHS are adopting at pace (R, Python, predictive analytics).
- 3) Peer support group with others on the programme.
- 4) Confidence to share my skills with others where required.

### From having undertaken the apprenticeship, have you progressed in your role? If so, please explain

Yes! I've recently secured a new role with the Apollo team in Data, Technology and Information, working with the readiness team to help departments transition to Epic. The skills I have learned, and my experience – including critical thinking, project management, requirements analysis and data analysis - will be critical to this work!

### Would you recommend apprenticeships and why?

Absolutely. As an existing member of staff working at a Band 8a, and not a school/college leaver; I was initially unsure if I could apply for an apprenticeship – there is a stigma that this is for “younger people”. I would absolutely challenge this.

Apprenticeships are an excellent way for anyone to upskill in an existing, or new, area of work and be able to demonstrate their commitment to their career progression and professional development.

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