

## ***Kath Ashton Personal Statement: Trust POCT Co-ordinator 2008***

I am thoroughly enjoying my new career and the staff at Royal Liverpool have made me very welcome. I now have to put all my knowledge and training into practice. I am so grateful to Greenwich University for offering the On-line Master's course as this has enabled me to make a career change.

### **Personal statement**

Following graduation with distinction in the Masters in Biomedical Science at the University of Greenwich in 2007, I felt that I was ready to further my career as Trust Point of Care Testing Co-ordinator. The Masters modules, which I undertook at Greenwich University, focused on Point of Care Testing (POCT), Quality Systems Management, Implementing Advanced Quality Management, Healthcare Associated Infection and a research module specialising in POCT. Following completion of this Masters, I also qualified for Fellowship of the Institute of Biomedical Science (FIBMS).

For the past 32 year, I have gained a significant amount of clinical knowledge, skills and postgraduate supervisory/training experience, working within the Biochemistry Department as a Specialist Biomedical Scientist. My current duties and Masters experience have ensured that I have an in-depth knowledge of complex Biochemistry instrumentation, detailed understanding of Clinical Biochemistry and Quality Control; that would enable me to undertake this position facilitating and ensuring effective liaison with service users across the Trust in relation to POCT.

As a result of personal interest following an in-house audit of POCT Blood Gas Analysers, I chose to undertake a two-year national MSc research project relating to POCT training, within the Emergency Departments in Secondary Care Trusts. Research findings have since been presented orally at the Northwest POCT forum in June 2007. The MSc project required in-depth knowledge of Quality Standards, research and evaluation skills and a high level of computer literacy including presentation of the dissertation and data analysis. Oral and written presentations within my clinical role and further education have contributed to my personal and professional development of leadership, effective communication and people management skills. The research element and regular uptake of departmental audits and reports such as COSHH and CPA, also require the use of interpersonal skills in the dissemination of findings via Service Improvement team meetings, Departmental and Health and Safety meetings.

The Quality Systems Management module required acquisition of knowledge and its application in the reorganisation of one particular section within the Biochemistry department. This included simplification of systems management, improvements to operational (Information Technology and paper based) documentation and ensured compliance with Clinical Pathology Accreditation (CPA) Standards and Health and Safety. This particular module focused on the application of change, quality management systems, reducing errors and overall facilitating improvement of clinical biochemistry referral services. In turn this enabled improvement of COSHH, Health and Safety, Quality Systems Management, CPA standards within the Pathology

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Department. This experience enhanced my management skills which are invaluable for such a position; where service improvement, ensuring the provision of advice, troubleshooting, maintenance and repair of analytical systems across both Trust sites, including POCT ward based analytical systems are paramount.

The Implementing Advanced Quality Management module required the development and delivery of a training package requiring staff motivation and protected training time organisation for trained, non-trained staff and university students. Following completion of a six-month rolling programme audits and session feedback were analysed and delivered as a presentation. Such skills from the masters and my clinical experience in training Pathology staff, are transferable to the provision of necessary training for staff training programmes for medical, nursing, scientific and technical staff concerning POCT. Additionally, my clinical knowledge coupled with effective communication and interpersonal skills shall be invaluable in the advisory role to clinicians and other service users relating to POCT technical and analytical issues.

I also attended the American Association of Clinical Chemistry 21st International Conference for POCT, in Quebec, Canada during October 2006. The knowledge, research, audit, communication and presentation skills gained through my clinical career and further education enabled me to fulfil the personal specification of this position.

My previous Pathology duties and Masters modules included the need to demonstrate my ability to produce and analyse data, generate reports and disseminate findings appropriately. This is particularly evident when presenting vital clinical data under tight time constraints and challenging deadlines/turn-around-times. Committing to the Masters Programme and its completion with a distinction, displayed my organisational ability to manage a full-time position, organise further education and ensure a healthy work-life balance. The Quality Systems Management module also taught me to analyse my personal strength and recognise my own limitations. I have developed a passion for POCT and I am sure that my enthusiasm and willingness to accept a challenge will prove to be ideal for a change in professional career direction. I felt that following the Masters experience and broad range of clinical experiences within Biochemistry, Health and Safety and COSHH, I was ready to face the new and exciting challenges within the role as Trust POCT Co-ordinator.