

Case Study

Mary Seacole



South West
Leadership Academy

I came into nursing late, deciding to opt for a career change at 38. I gained experience in working in mental health settings and now this was the career for me. That was nine years ago. I qualified as a RMHN in 2008 gaining my first job role as a staff nurse on an Acute Inpatient Ward for Adults aged 18 and over.

Within 2 years I was acting charge nurse then gained the permanent role of charge nurse and have been in post for 3 years. It was a huge step for me as I would be in a position of leadership over some colleagues who have over 20 years of experience working within the NHS. The job role is incredibly busy especially with so many changes happening within the NHS. Financial constraints, more for less but continuing to deliver high quality safe care that remains patient focused is challenging.

When the opportunity to apply for the NHS Leadership Academy Mary Seacole programme came up I knew I had to apply, to my surprise I was accepted. I didn't know what to expect but hoped this would develop me as a leader as I have had no formal training and very little informal training.

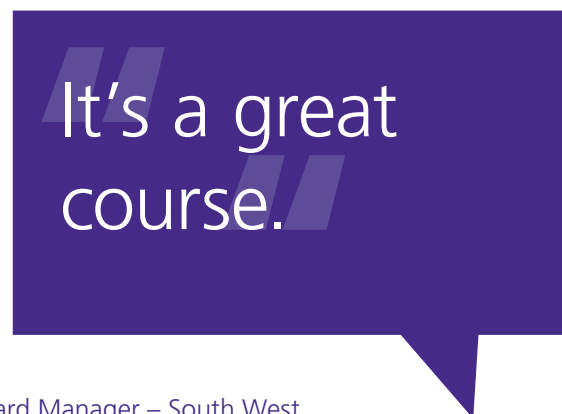
The programme has not failed to deliver. As I have worked through the varying units, at times it has been a revelation and I enjoy it immensely. It has given me a greater understanding of myself, my strengths and weaknesses, helped me identify the type of leader I want to be and understand the skills needed to achieve this. The concepts, theories, frameworks and workshops, in particular our tutor workshops I find hugely valuable and all continue to challenge my thinking and now in a wider context.

I have found the programme inspires me, reminds me when we are exhausted and fraught at work why I chose this career – to make a difference to those who are suffering and to ensure they remain central to the process of all that we as nurses do. The course has changed me already into a better leader and this has been evidenced by feedback from colleagues. The programme helped me understand the functioning of my team, the learning styles and how new ways of working (adaptive challenges) that we introduce cause disequilibrium.

Recognising this now enables me to engage with team members and support them through so many changes that are currently happening with redesign of services.

I was asked recently to apply for the Ward Manager role on the Older Adult Acute Inpatient Ward for functional illness. I was successful and have been appointed and due to take up the post shortly. The programme has explored an incredible amount relating to the NHS which has broadened my outlook, increased my knowledge base and gave me the confidence to apply for this post. During my presentation I was able to communicate clearly what was expected and demonstrate my knowledge. I definitely would not have been able to do this if it were not for the programme.

I now have my own adaptive challenge to work through, a new team and I am apprehensive but excited at the same time. This is an exciting opportunity to be in a leadership role with authority and be able to help shape future healthcare outcomes. I firmly believe I would not have been able to feel like this prior to beginning the NHS Leadership Academy Mary Seacole programme.



Ward Manager – South West

