



Susan Miller, one of the first students to enrol in a new 18 month nurse degree apprenticeship.

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## **UK's first 18-month nursing degree apprenticeship launched**

Northumbria University, Newcastle will welcome its first ever nursing degree apprentices next month, in a brand new partnership with Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

The collaboration will be the first in the North East to deliver a nursing degree apprenticeship programme, and create England's first ever apprenticeship-qualified nurses by March 2020.

Nursing degree apprenticeships were announced by the government in 2016, as a way of opening-up nursing careers to more people and bringing more qualified nurses into the NHS.

Since then, Northumbria University has been working with Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust to develop and design its own degree apprenticeship programme.

The collaboration was the first from the region to receive approval from the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) earlier this year, and will launch on Monday, 24 September.

The eight apprentice nurses who'll train with Northumbria University are all Assistant Practitioners within Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, working across the Freeman Hospital or Royal Victoria Infirmary, and their bespoke programme has been created to fit the needs of the Trust.

This includes delivery over just 18 months, rather than the standard two to four years; the trainees' previous experience on the wards, combined with foundation degree qualifications that they already hold, qualifies them to cover the programme in a shorter time frame.

Northumbria is the only institute in the country so far to receive approval for an 18-month programme.

When the nursing apprentices graduate in 2020, they'll officially be the first in the entire country to hold the nursing degree apprenticeship qualification, which will be equivalent to a standard Bachelor's degree. They'll also be eligible to apply to become a registered nurse.

Professor Alison Machin, Head of Department, Nursing Midwifery and Health, Northumbria University, said: "Northumbria University is proud to be at the forefront of delivering nursing education in the UK, with the creation of this brand new degree apprenticeship qualification, recently approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

"This high-quality degree apprenticeship offers a new and different route for aspiring nurses to qualify in the profession, with the opportunity for trainees

to earn as they learn, and we're delighted to be collaborating with the award-winning Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust in its delivery.

"The programme will be delivered by experienced, expert academics and these apprentices will learn from the best, creating more excellent nurses for our NHS."

Maurya Cushlow, Executive Chief Nurse at Newcastle-upon-Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, said: "It's great to be part of this new initiative and I'm really pleased that we could offer this opportunity to staff who've worked at the Trust for a number of years.

"The partnership between Northumbria University and Trust has been instrumental in getting us to this position. It's a great example of using the opportunity created by the apprenticeship levy to develop a bespoke programme for experienced staff to take that next step in their nursing career. We wish them every success."

Susan Miller, aged 53 and from Lemington, Newcastle is one of the nursing degree apprentices who'll start the programme in September. She currently works as an Assistant Practitioner within the Dermatology unit at Newcastle's Royal Victoria Infirmary, and says she was 'overjoyed' when her application to study was successful.

Susan has worked in healthcare for almost 18 years, starting as domestic assistant then working and studying her way through the ranks to assistant practitioner, securing qualifications up to foundation degree level along the way – including self-funded study with the Open University.

She said: "I am so excited to be starting this degree apprenticeship. I've always wanted to be a nurse, and this is such a fantastic opportunity. The best bit about nursing for me is the contact with patients and being able to offer them the support they need. I'm really looking forward to branching out in nursing once I'm qualified, and I'd love to be able to work in either women's health or dementia care, to make a real difference."

Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust will use finance available from the Government's Apprenticeship Levy scheme to fund the university fees, and the nursing apprentices will all receive a Band 5 nursing

salary from Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust as they train on the programme.

The newly-qualified nurses will complete their training in March 2020 and graduate in July 2020.

For more information on nursing, midwifery and health courses at Northumbria University, visit [www.northumbria.ac.uk/nursing](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk/nursing)

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