



## Making the most of an opportunity.

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**Sally Harvey**  
Spire Hartswood Hospital apprentice

[Link to Strategy:](#)

### 5. Best place to work

It is never easy to balance the needs of a young family and the pressures of work, but it takes an extra special effort to add in the demands of an apprenticeship and the evening and weekend work that comes with it. When such an opportunity came up for Sally Harvey in January 2018, she grabbed it, but she knew it would be a real challenge.

Sally was working 17 hours a week as a Medical Laboratory Assistant at Spire Hartswood Hospital in Brentwood, which allowed her to fit school runs and other family commitments into her week. However, this new commitment would add another full working day to her schedule. “I wasn’t sure how to juggle the apprenticeship around family life, but I was reassured that it was all up to me, and that I could quit any time if it didn’t work out,” Sally explains.

Spire Hartswood Hospital Director, Jo Dean, had to sign off the apprenticeship and has been very supportive during the year, as have Sally’s colleagues in the laboratory. “They are always ready to answer my questions to help me achieve my Lab Technician Level 3 qualification,” says Sally. “It’s also great to be part of a team of apprentices from different hospitals around the country who support each other. We talk regularly on a WhatsApp group, helping each other and sharing experience, and we get to network and meet up at training events.”

Jo Dean has been impressed by the dedication and hard work that saw Sally awarded runner-up at our training provider’s internal Apprentice of the Year awards: “I have heard nothing but praise for Sally. She has been awarded the merit badge for her efforts, and her tutors have drawn attention to her outstanding commitment to her academic responsibilities. It’s an amazing achievement.”

“I’m not sure many people at Spire Hartswood Hospital even knew I was doing the apprenticeship until the award came up,” says Sally. “And people don’t realise that these apprenticeships are available to anyone, not just school leavers. Hopefully, this will encourage more people to apply.”

Sally’s current apprenticeship is a two-year programme, but she is on track to complete it around four months early, in August 2019 – and she has no plans to stop there. No stranger to academia, having previously earned a criminology degree at university, Sally’s next goal is to train as a biomedical scientist, which would involve one day a week at university over three years.