

*Lisa is an AHP
Health Care
Support Worker.
This is the story of
her AHP Careers
Fellowship*

What did you do with your AHP Fellowship?

Well, my Fellowship came out of our local Scottish Patient Safety Programme activity. We needed someone to support teams to basically improve the way they went about their improvement projects (things they were doing or thinking of doing). So, the Fellowship allowed me to take on that role. It was a little bit vague at the beginning, but everyone was clear that it wasn't about me being the 'improvement superhero'! We all learned along the way about what would be useful and what would make a difference to the teams. My role became focused on supporting people to use an improvement model, improvement methods and coaching them as their projects progressed.

How do you think the Fellowship supported your career development?

I couldn't have done what I did without the support of my service, the teams, the leaders and managers and the Career Fellowship Scheme. It allowed me to get some qualifications in improvement which I can use in the future. I got the opportunity to try out a role I was interested in but couldn't make the leap to in one go, and I now have experience in that area that I can use in any job. Developing my knowledge about improvement models and working with the teams meant I was seen as the 'go to' person. It gave me the recognition that I was able to do this. It was really satisfying being able to shape changes and see the difference it made. That gave me a real sense of pride and achievement that I can take with me into any future job or role. Coaching other people at every level in the organisation built my confidence and gave me a much better idea of the whole organisation.

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***What advice would you give to other
HCSWs thinking about applying?***

*Have faith in the knowledge and skills
you already have and build on them.*

*You don't have to have a perfectly
formed idea...a good idea is enough.
You'll need other people to support
you so share your ideas to get them
to listen. The Fellowship is your
ally, go for it and your idea will
grow and grow*

What were the main things you learned?

I learned lots of skills and I learned some things about myself. I learned about models for improvement, project management skills, organisational skills and time management skills. I also learned about the work that was important to different parts of the service and how they all fit into the bigger picture. For myself, I learned about being assertive, developing my confidence and communication skills that helped people to reach a good compromise position when needed. You might call that peacekeeping skills! I also challenged my perception of myself and my role through mentoring or coaching people who respected my knowledge and skills. That helped my sense of self-worth...and maybe it also challenged other people's ideas about who can take on what roles within a team (it wasn't about my band or level of seniority in the hierarchy).