

Firstly, I would like to extend a heartfelt thank you to the Foundation for Professionals in Services for Adolescents for funding me to undertake the course 'Post Graduate Diploma Advanced Mental Health Practice', for which I have now completed and achieved a distinction!

This is a value and practice based course and is the training route required in order to become an Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP).

Currently the AMHPs involved in Mental Health Act (MHA) Assessments in Devon all come from a social work background with professional experience in adult mental health and as such there is limited experience of working therapeutically with children and young people with mental health difficulties.

Having now completed the course I am the only nurse-trained AMHP in Devon (there are not many nationwide either). This has been greatly received within the team and wider services as it has broadened the professional background and experience within the team. My hope now, is to improve access to this training for interested mental health nurses.

The overall aim of undertaking this training was to not only greatly enhance my professional practice but to improve the service we offer to children and young people who are experiencing a mental health crisis and their families. Having an AMHP based in CAMHS will improve the process of a Mental Health Act assessment for young people (and their families), and where possible reduce and/or prevent compulsory admission and treatment, as a result of the expertise I can bring to the assessment.

In this role, I will be able to act as a specialist advisor to CAMHS teams across Devon on areas requiring an AMHP's expertise and knowledge. This would include the ability to clarify statutory duties, responsibilities and legislation; the ever-changing legal frameworks governing 'deprivation of liberty' and the admission to hospital and treatment of children and young people; identifying least restrictive and legally viable options; while upholding a person's fundamental human rights. Ultimately, seeking the most desirable outcomes for young people.

Furthermore, in this role (when not coordinating the MHA assessment) I will be able to offer support and specialist advice to the AMHP and assessing team on child and adolescent mental health when children and young people are being considered for assessment under the Act, thus improving overall outcomes for young people.

I believe my skills are best suited to this area of work, and my interests and experience certainly reflect this, and are a testament to my passion and dedication for working with such vulnerable, complex and high-risk young people.

Having now completed the course it has reinforced my passion for this avenue of work. I would like to say thank you again; your financial support has made my professional dream possible and now a reality.