Salisbury pharmacy enjoys the benefits of using Apprenticeship Training Agency

Three Swans is a small and busy pharmacy within a doctors’ surgery in Salisbury.

The pharmacy had the opportunity to introduce an apprentice as a Level 2 Dispensing Assistant. Three Swans knew from experience how much time and effort is required to fill a post, but one of the practice managers recommended the National Skills Academy for Health’s Apprenticeship Training Agency (ATA), which he had used elsewhere.

How they did it
Superintendent Pharmacist Alison Kidner got in touch with local ATA coordinator Christine Hansford to discuss her requirements.

The ATA has previously found apprentices for Level 2 Dispensing positions, and so there were already templates for the advert and job description. This saved Alison a lot of time, because she only needed to check through these templates and make a few amendments.

The ATA then advertised for and shortlisted the candidates and selected three for interview. Alison approved the selection and carried out the interviews with the co-ordinator from the ATA. She was able to appoint a candidate who had a ‘perfect blend’ of science education, including a college course in Health and Social Care, and retail experience.

The apprentice is employed by the ATA and hosted in the workplace by Three Swans. The ATA takes responsibility for all HR functions including payroll, performance management and progress on the Apprenticeship qualifications. Three Swans paid an administration fee on recruitment and is invoiced every month for the Apprentice’s salary.

“This has been a completely positive experience. The ATA did all the legwork, saving me an enormous amount of time, and therefore money.”
Alison Kidner
Our vision, and that of the employers with whom we work, is to create a qualified and transferable workforce, with every individual recognised and valued for the skills they have, and encouraged and enabled to develop the skills they want and need.

To find out more about the National Skills Academy for Health and how we can help you, please contact us today.

National Skills Academy for Health
9th floor, Lynton House
Tavistock Square
London WC1H 9LT
020 7391 7173

www.nsahealth.org.uk information@nsahealth.org.uk

Benefits of using the ATA

• The immediate saving in time and money was enormous, because the ATA took on responsibility for advertising for and shortlisting candidates and checking references.

• Within six to eight weeks of approaching the ATA, Three Swans was able to take on an exceptional apprentice who is already a valued member of the team.

• The ATA arranges appropriate training such as the specialist course ‘Buttercups’, and continues to monitor the apprentice to ensure good progress.

• The ATA is also working with Three Swans to access grants that are available to support the pharmacy in having an apprentice – these could include the National Apprenticeship Grant and local opportunities.

• The ATA provides a one-stop-shop for both Three Swans and the apprentice, and can deal with any issues which may arise.

• The apprentice has the potential to be developed beyond Level 2, as a Level 3 Dispensing Assistant or an Accuracy Checking Technician (ACT). If she can’t stay on at Three Swans at the end of her apprenticeship, she will be well qualified to find similar roles in hospitals and pharmacies.

Superintendent Pharmacist Alison Kidner says: ‘This has been a completely positive experience. The ATA did all the legwork, saving me an enormous amount of time, and therefore money. Its selection process was spot-on, helping me to find a perfect candidate for the role. Now we have a great apprentice and don’t have to worry about payroll, holidays and other employment issues.’

CASE STUDY

‘I wanted to move into the health sector and this has proved a brilliant opportunity. I am getting practical experience through working in the pharmacy and I am also learning and studying. I hope to achieve a Level 2 and then Level 3 Dispenser role. I’d like eventually to become a pharmacist.’

Amy Rogers, Dispensing Apprentice

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