

A day in the life of a student

BSHAA People is delighted to announce that it intends to showcase more student activity in coming editions. We start with a story about a day in the life of Robin Gordon. Robin is training for Hidden Hearing's 'Award in Hearing Aid Dispensing Competence' which was given HCPC approval last

October and is the only programme in the independent hearing sector to offer a work placed education allowing delegates to apply for HCPC registration. Twelve months on, a second cohort of new trainees has begun their journey and Robin has been elected their 'trainee representative'.

Just over a month ago the things that I knew about ears were, that they held my glasses on and I had one either side of my head. Ok, that's not entirely true, but I think you get the point.

Now here I am discussing linear gain over my breakfast and talking about disorders of the middle ear with my egg and chips! It is perhaps not hard to understand why I feel like my mind has been somewhat expanded. So I guess the question is how did this happen?

Dalton House is Hidden Hearing's purpose built residential training centre in Buxton. I arrived at Dalton House on an unusually warm September day along with 32 other people who were just like me... clueless as to what they were about to be subjected to.

The first thing that you notice is that the facilities at Dalton House are just about perfect for its function, there are just enough comforts of home to make you feel just that, at home. Also, recreations of a branch dispensing room and even a typical client's flat to practice in. The 'lecture' room is purpose designed and (luckily) air conditioned.

The next thing you realise is that the pace will not be slow! After the usual 'house-keeping' that you might expect when 30 odd strangers get together in unfamiliar surroundings, the lectures start in earnest on the first Thursday and before we all know what's happened we are drawing pinnae like there is no tomorrow. I never realised that the humble ear could have so many labels!

After three short weeks in the profession, my trainee colleagues and I had the opportunity to vote for a Trainee Representative. For whom the main role would be to sit on the Steering Committee and help to ensure that Hidden Hearing's Award in Hearing Aid Dispensing Competence remains as (to date) the only HCPC approved industry qualification. The Trainee Representative also relays the views and concerns of the cohort to the training team and vice versa. I was incredibly honoured to be elected by my peers and I can only hope that I can do the role justice.

So, the pace is relentless, the lectures come thick and fast and the question we are all asking is, "does this prepare me for life in the role?"

We got our chance to find out when after three weeks at Dalton House we were packed off to spend a week with our Practice Educators in the field.

For me, that meant travelling to Cardiff and observing the day-to-day running of a branch just outside the city centre.

The flow of clientele was non-stop and no sooner had one left than another arrived to have a hearing test or an adjustment to an existing aid. The dispenser was professional and demonstrated an understanding of her client's needs in every appointment and situation.

The thoughts going through my mind were along the lines of "how can I expect to get to this level?" Then I think about the pace of the course and I realise that I will get to that level because the trainers will make sure I do!

So, back to Buxton for another exam followed by more soul searching and self-recrimination as we try to work out whether we could have written more about this, or been a little bit more accurate about that. The one thing we can be sure of though is that we all have access to top quality lecturing, first class facilities with second to none resources and if we add in a big dose of our own determination, we can succeed. ■

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