

# Natasha Barr- Band 3 Dietetic Support Worker



## What does your job entail?

As a dietetic support worker within the acute and paediatric allergy teams I undertake a range of duties including clinical and administrative tasks, assisting the dietitians in their day to day roles. Each morning begins preparing patient record cards for new patient referrals and updating any new blood results for patients on the dietitians list for that day. I complete patient telephone reviews and discuss action points with the dietitians. Working within acute I complete nutritional follow up reviews of patients already known to the dietitians. Reviews include checking food record charts, bowel movements, fluid balance charts, skin charts, patient weights and any current issues or recent plans for patient. I also assist in oral food challenges in the paediatric day case unit two mornings a week and the ordering of oral nutritional supplements for the hospital once weekly ensuring adequate stock for each ward and keeping diet sheets/resources stock up to date and relevant.

## How did you get into this line of work?

I studied Food and Nutrition in University of Ulster and graduated in June 2013. In third year of the course I completed a 48 week placement in Tyrone County Hospital in the Diabetes Support team as a nutrition student so I always knew I wanted to work in a person centred care role.

## Outline your career to date?

My course at University was 4 years in which the third year was a placement year. I graduated in BSc (Hons) Food and Nutrition in June 2013. I worked in community pharmacy as a dispensing assistant for nearly ten years. I interviewed for band 3 Dietetic support worker waiting list in February 2023 and was successful. I started my role in June 2023.

## **Tell us about your qualifications and training?**

To gain a place at University of Ulster to study Food and nutrition and I had to achieve 3 A Levels at grade B. I also obtained a diploma in industrial studies gained from placement. Since beginning my role in 2023 I have undertaken five courses via the BDA learning zone for dietetic support workers and gained a foundation food safety certificate. I continue to learn and gain new skills every day with the support of my team.

## **What qualities do you feel are required for your job – personal and professional?**

To be compassionate and show empathy to patients is vital. Have excellent listening skills with patients and within your team. Organisational and time management is important as there is a variety of tasks to complete on a daily basis so being able to prioritise your workload is a must. Knowledge of basic nutrition and eager to learn.

## **What is the best advice you have ever received?**

Don't let yesterday take up too much of today

## **A little bit more about me ...**

I have two sons and a dog. We love forest walks, getting out in nature and camping trips.

## **What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?**

Appreciate who you are and always be your authentic self.

