

Niaomi Williams, Catherine Cox and Janine Williams

Niaomi, Catherine and Janine are based at United Lincolnshire Hospitals Trust, read below thier case study.

Our role as Assistant Practitioners in Mammography is to perform radiographic imaging of the breast to the national occupational standard under the supervision of HCPC registered radiographers. In doing so we need to make our patients feel as comfortable as possible during such an intimate examination.

Our duties are undertaken at the three static breast units at hospitals in Lincoln, Boston & Grantham. Breast Screening is also carried out on our two mobile screening units located at various sites across the community of Lincolnshire. The locations of the mobile units vary according to the needs of the service. Alongside breast screening, we also have symptomatic clinics which consist of GP referrals.

We also provide administrative & clinical support to the multi-disciplinary breast imaging team, which can consist of covering reception, helping chaperone in ultrasound clinics and stereotactic procedures. As accredited assistant practitioners, we have to participate in continuing professional development (CPD) activities to ensure the minimum standard for Accreditation with the Society of Radiographers (SoR) are met. In addition to our general duties, we also have our individual jobs such as ordering the stock needed for the department, organising the images needed for our Multi-Disciplinary team meeting twice a week and overseeing the daily, weekly and monthly Quality Assurance tests. As a radiology department, to keep everyone safe, we must monitor radiation safety for ourselves, our patients and others within areas where radiation is delivered.

We first started our career as Clinical Imaging Assistants. Eventually, we worked our way up to become assistant practitioners. Similarly, you can apply externally for a trainee assistant practitioner position. Training involves a year long course undertaken in Coventry (other training providers are available). This consisted of fortnightly lectures at the university hospital, four weeks of practical training at their static breast-screening department in Nuneaton, assignments and a breast anatomy exam. At the end of this, we are certified in Advanced Apprenticeship in Clinical Healthcare (Level 3) in Mammography. Alongside this, we have to gain a Level 3 diploma in clinical healthcare support (QCF).

The Breast department is made up of numerous disciplines, administration, medical secretaries, radiology, nurses, breast care nurses, consultants and theatre staff so we are a big team. Our main goal is to provide the best service possible for our patients which we achieve on a daily basis and receive very good feedback from many of our patients, personally and via Patient Advice and Liaison service (PALS).