

GLOBAL PA NETWORK PA CASE STUDY

Hays Secretarial/Times Crème PA of the Year Winner 2009
Anuszka Elland, Office Manager & PA to Kate Davies, Strategic Director at Safer Nottinghamshire Drug & Alcohol Team, NHS Nottinghamshire County.

Q.1 Describe your role and how many people you work for?

I work for Kate Davies who has an enormous role heading up the Drug & Alcohol Action Team at NHS Nottinghamshire. Her role as Strategic Director gives her responsibility for Health, Equality & Diversity as part of the Human Rights agenda. As well as working for Kate I offer support as a Business Manager to Kate's three Direct Reports which involves restructure, recruitment, supporting and organising work plans and organise team meetings. I am also the Office Manager and supervise 4 other PAs and three of them are fully line managed by me.

Q.2 How would you describe your relationship with your boss?

I have an excellent relationship with Kate and we understand each other very well and there is mutual respect between us. I believe strongly that the role requires a good supporting relationship and that you need to be in the mind of your boss and anticipate their every need. You are the first point of contact and that first impression really counts. I have worked for Kate for three years and initially started as a temp and was then promoted and offered a permanent position.

Whilst working for NHS Notts I have take the following qualifications: HNC Marketing & Media & Level 5 Chartered Management Institute Management & Leadership Qualification, this is a degree level equivalent and its 20 hours a month through home study. This qualification will give me a boost at work and the potential to move to a higher band and it is funded by my organisation as part of my personal development plan.

Q.3 Tell us about a typical day?

Every day there are different challenges. I receive 80-100 e-mails a day and spend 2 hours in the morning actioning and flagging them up. I take minutes of meetings and have recently been sorting the Pandemic response equipment for health staff. I also liaise regularly with the Home Office, Government Ministers and Community members. My boss, Kate Davies, is a senior member of staff and often has to react quickly to different situations. She also travels a lot and works remotely and has many responsibilities. I help her coordinate her role and try and do as much for her as I can to ease the pressure and I regularly plan ahead. Each day is varied and I never get bored. I meet regularly with the other PAs and we have a 1:1 once a month and I assess their training needs e.g. they are attending a Minute Taking made easy course.

Q.4 What are the major challenges you face in your job?

There are not enough hours in the day and I use time management to prioritise. I regularly have to problem solve which can be a challenge and need to anticipate problems in advance.

I do achieve work life balance and always remain enthusiastic. I do feel that recognition is lacking for PAs and they can lack motivation if they are not recognised. I have a big workload and would like to increase my skills and move up the ladder. At present I am regularly doing work above my grade.

Q.5. What opportunities does your business offer for promotion?

See Q. 2.

Q.6. How often do you attend training courses?

I attend external and internal courses on management training, minute taking, drug and alcohol awareness etc. I am also participating in the Pacesetters project. This is a 9 month project and you can have a work placement taster of working in different environments and grades. In my next role I would like to engage with the community and develop as a Project Manager in Comms. We have yearly Career Development Reviews and there are opportunities to develop. The other PAs in my team do want to develop and one is doing an NVQ in Business Administration and one in Hospital Administration.

Quote from Kate Davies, Strategic Director, NHS Notts County and Manager of Anuszka Elland

“Having a quality and efficient PA with insight and innovation is unquestionably the reason why the work that I have undertaken has been a success. A PA that does not support at this level or this depth or this quality can slow down the process of delivery. Anuszka, like any senior PA can work across all levels but she can also communicate in difficult situations and takes a very calm and balanced view when others are less able to do so. A good PA makes a team a success and brings out the best in individuals.”