

'I was over the moon with the achievement'

In 2020 Isobel Davies was named BDA Education Outstanding Oral Health Education (OHE) student of 2020. **Kate Quinlan** caught up with Isobel to find out about her career and experience of the OHE course.



Isobel Davies, 44, is a dental nurse and IPC [infection prevention and control] lead at a general dental practice in Carmarthen, West Wales, but originally hails from Basingstoke, Hampshire.

Interview

How did you first get into dentistry?

I was 19 and looking for jobs in the local paper for a full-time job with long term prospects. I knew I wanted to do something medical related but was not sure what. I saw the job of trainee dental nurse and thought I would give it a try.

What appealed to you about working in dentistry?

I knew I wanted to do something in healthcare. Training on the job really appealed to me as I was able to work while learning a profession.

Can you outline your career history to date?

I started training in 1996 at Old Oak Dental Practice in Carmarthen and qualified with the National Certificate in 1998. I continued working at the same practice until 2001 when I trained as a pharmacy technician which I worked as until 2006 on a temporary contract. When that ended, I decided I would go back to dental nursing as I had enjoyed my time as dental nurse. I worked in a dental practice in the town of Newcastle Emlyn before returning to Old Oak Dental Practice in Carmarthen in 2010, the practice where I trained to be a dental nurse. I have been here 11 years now. We recently moved to a new purpose built practice which has been great and I am really enjoying working here as we have a lovely new practice and a fantastic team of staff.

Have you continued working during the pandemic?

I was on furlough between March and November 2020. I started back in November 2020 and have been doing my normal hours ever since.

Why did you decide to study the BDA Oral Health Education (OHE) course?

The Old Oak Dental Practice owner Adam Llewellyn who took over the practice in 2018 asked if I would like to do the course as he thought I would be good at it. I had considered doing the course before as I thought I would enjoy it and find it interesting and I wanted to learn more to be able to educate our patients, provide better care and to aid my professional growth.

What did you think of the course?

I really enjoyed the course and liked the fact it was online but with a good support system. The course was very informative providing all the information needed.

It did require a lot of study time which I was prepared for from reading about the course before signing up for it. I wanted to do well so therefore put in extra time.

Learning online was much better than having to travel to a course, and I was able to go over things a few times with it being online.

How did it feel to be named the BDA Education Outstanding OHE student of 2020?

I was very surprised but over the moon with the achievement.

Have you used your OHE qualification since completing the course?

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic I have not had much opportunity to use the OHE qualification so far but hopefully that will change as things start to get back to normal.

Has it benefitted your career?

It has helped my professional development and I feel confident to be able to educate our patients on oral health when the opportunity arises.

Would you recommend the course to other dental nurses?

Yes, I would. It was a very enjoyable and

informative course and I would recommend it to any dental nurses wanting to train as an oral health educator.

Do you have further career plans?

I would like to take the fluoride application course as I think this will complement the oral health education qualification. Our practice owner Adam is very supportive and encourages us to further our careers.

I am currently studying for a level 2 IPC lead course.

Do you provide oral health advice to your own family and friends?

Yes, I do tend to give them advice! I am often asked by them for help on their oral health.

What are your plans for this summer and beyond? [question asked in June 2021]

I hope to be able to spend quality time with family and friends which has not been possible due to COVID-19 and enjoy the little things that we took for granted before like days and meals out and barbecues. I'm not planning to go abroad for a while yet but will holiday in the UK. We are very lucky here in Carmarthenshire and have beautiful countryside and beaches on our doorstep.

What do you like to do outside work?

I enjoy walking in the countryside in Carmarthenshire and surrounding areas. I like visiting the local beaches and browsing in the local independent shops. In my spare time I also enjoy doing various craft activities and also watching a few boxsets on the TV!

For more information on the BDA's OHE course, visit <https://bda.org/dcps>.

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