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RUH inspires our future generation of healthcare professionals

One hundred students interested in forging a career in healthcare were given the opportunity to find out what it's really like to work for the NHS during a three-day conference held at the Royal United Hospital this week.

The AS Level students, aged 16 and 17, from 31 schools in the Bath and North East Somerset area, were given a valuable insight into a range of healthcare professions. The students learnt what a 'typical' day is for a GP, nurse, midwife, physiotherapist and occupational therapist, as well as how long it takes to train, how much you can earn and the sort of person you need to be to work in the healthcare sector.

One of the presenters, physiotherapist Chris Martey, said: "It was a great opportunity to speak to young people about healthcare and my profession – something I couldn't miss. I love to inspire young people and I hope some of them will consider physiotherapy as it's an exciting profession and an excellent career choice."

For the students, highlights at the conference included learning how to apply a plaster cast, taking blood on a fake arm, and watching a knee replacement operation which was broadcast live from the operating theatre so they could watch the theory they learnt put in practice.

Rose Anderson, whose knee was replaced, said: "It's important for young people to learn and hear first-hand from someone who is a patient. I was happy to talk to the students about my knee, and how the knee replacement will help improve my life. I've already had a knee replacement in my other leg which has done wonders because I can now bend and walk on it."

Tim Poke, aged 16, of Colston School in Bristol said: "I found the knee operation really interesting and it was really good to listen to the orthopaedic surgeon, his passion for improving the quality of people's lives was quite something. Having this opportunity to come here has given me fresh ideas about what career choices I have as I haven't heard of some of the professions before. It's been great."

Claire Taylor, lead consultant and one of the organisers of the conference, said: "It's been a fantastic three days. We have run this event for 11 years and seen over 1,100 students take part. Our aim is to educate, inspire and help them make some important decisions about what they want to do after they leave school.

"Feedback from students has shown that they have really appreciated the effort put in by the RUH staff and I would like to thank them for giving up their time to come and talk about their profession. I hope that some of these students will become future healthcare professionals for the NHS."

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