

Veterinary receptionist becomes first in UK to gain qualification

A receptionist working at a County Durham veterinary practice has become the first in the UK to achieve a qualification that recognises outstanding front-desk skills. Her achievement comes as a double celebration as she has just given birth to a baby boy.

Erika Mason, 28, of The Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital in Leadgate near Consett sailed through the new Level 2 Certificate for Veterinary Practice Receptionists, gaining credits and a distinction in her modules. The top award was gained for demonstrating first class reception skills, which included a requirement to prove her ability to communicate clearly and effectively with clients. Other modules in the City and Guilds course, which was taken over four months, included record keeping and finance, health and safety and employment issues.



Erika who has worked at the practice for three years was the first of thirty students taking the course to achieve the National Proficiency Tests Council (NPTC) qualification.

Delighted to be the first to pass and gain such outstanding results, Erika said: “It all came as a shock, but I’m so pleased. It was quite intensive, particularly combined with working full-time at the practice, and being pregnant. I can’t recommend the course highly enough as it really helps to improve the practical skills needed to do this job to a high level and to cope with a range of situations in practice as well as to learn more about vital areas such as health and safety and risk assessments.”

Principal vet Jacqui Molyneux said: “I am very proud of Erika’s achievement, which is a real credit to her hard work and her dedication to the job. The extra skills and knowledge gained by taking the course will benefit both Erika and the whole practice. We like to provide all of our staff with training opportunities in their area of work.”

The Prince Bishop Veterinary Hospital is one of only a handful of Accredited Veterinary Hospitals in the region, a prestigious status awarded by the industry’s regulatory body the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons (RCVS) following a rigorous inspection and assessment of facilities. The practice has 20 members of staff and facilities including a diagnostic imaging room with modern x-ray equipment and ultrasound as well as a state of the art hydrotherapy pool for animals with conditions like arthritis and fractures.