Raising concerns
Confidentiality is paramount: use formal channels of support, such as your union, to talk over the incident, and focus informal support from family and friends on how you are feeling, as opposed to the details of what has happened.

‘Employers claim they can’t afford golden hellos, yet they spend a premium on trips to the Philippines, Spain and Portugal to recruit nurses’
Lord Willis
Shape of Caring review author

Little things make a big difference

- balance increasing demands with decreasing resources.
  However, you still have a duty to treat people individually. This includes looking after basic care needs which, if not met, can affect overall well-being.
  Since 2015 the Nursing and Midwifery Council code has stressed the importance of delivering the ‘fundamentals of care’. This term is not new – in 2003, the Welsh Government outlined the 12 areas of care that patients identified as being the most important:
  » Communication and information.
  » Respecting people.
  » Ensuring safety.
  » Promoting independence.
  » Relationships.
  » Rest, sleep and activity.
  » Ensuring comfort: alleviating pain.
  » Personal hygiene and appearance and foot care.
  » Eating and drinking.
  » Oral health and hygiene.
  » Toilet needs.
  » Preventing pressure ulcers. Reflecting on this list, can you think of ways to enhance your practice? Sometimes it is just a small change that makes a big difference to those in your care.

International assignments are a great way for UK nurses and other healthcare professionals to broaden their experience and work in some of the world’s most modern hospitals.
As well as seeing how healthcare is delivered in other countries, nurses can enhance their career prospects as they gain experience overseas.
My company helps hospitals in the Middle East recruit healthcare professionals from around the world, with opportunities for nurses including endoscopy, gynaecology, cardiac and intensive care roles.
The working language of the hospitals is English, but as most patients speak Arabic, nurses are encouraged to take up free classes provided to help them master the basics. Mandatory courses in nursing skills are also provided, which help UK nurses maintain their registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Council.

Overcoming barriers
Working with people from different cultural backgrounds and overcoming language barriers can help improve communication skills, and adapting to new and unfamiliar environments helps improve flexibility.
The healthcare professionals we place in the Middle East often enjoy a tax-free salary and contract benefits such as free accommodation, flights and healthcare, plus a generous leave package of up to 61 days a year. The cost of living is lower than in any Western country, and the location of...
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is the average age of nursing students, but figures show new applicants are younger, with more mature students being pushed out, says the RCN education forum’s Sarah Burden

rcni.com/leaky-bucket

‘Nursing apprenticeships could result in longer-term retention and a consistent and cohesive approach to patient care’

Angelo Vareto
Skills for Health head of national occupational standards, qualifications and apprenticeships

rcni.com/apprenticeship-myths

Saudi Arabia is great for travelling. We provide a free service that helps healthcare professionals through the application and interview process, guide candidates through licence and visa paperwork, and prepare instruction packs for registering with the Saudi Council.

**Dress code**

Saudi Arabia is an Islamic country with strictly enforced codes; check the Foreign Office website for advice (see below).

For female candidates, a common concern is what they can wear. In public, women are required to wear an abaya, a lightweight cloak that drapes over clothing, and should carry a scarf in case they are requested to cover their hair. Clothing in the housing compounds is more casual, and uniforms are provided by hospitals.

Female nurses can walk around freely on their own at any time. They are not allowed to drive, but the hospitals have drivers available. Male nurses are not allowed to care for women or children on their own.

For nurses interested in working overseas, the Middle East offers a chance to work with multinational colleagues while gaining experience.

Ann Griffin-Aaronlahti is managing director of global healthcare recruitment company Professional Connections, www.profco.com

For Foreign Office advice on Saudi Arabia, go to tinyurl.com/saudi-travel

Visit the Professional Connections stand at the RCN Bulletin Jobs Fair in London on 3-4 October. For more information, go to www.rcnbulletinjobsfair.co.uk

**60-SECOND INTERVIEW**

Laughing and innovating

Everything you do will teach you something useful, says lead nurse for dementia Joanna James

After qualifying as a nurse at St Mary’s Hospital in London in 1988, Joanna James spent 20 years working in emergency departments. She co-developed and ran a successful education programme around the needs of refugees and survivors of torture. In 2008 she changed direction and started working on improving services for people with dementia in hospital. She is now lead nurse for dementia at Imperial College Healthcare NHS Trust in London.

**What are your main work responsibilities?**

I run a small team that provides training, resources and support to staff in clinical areas, and clinical support to patients and families using our services.

**How did you get your job?**

My first role in dementia care was at Imperial in 2008. I loved working at the trust so when the chance to go back came up, I went for it.

**Who are your clients/patients?**

Anyone who has or is affected by dementia, including staff.

**What do you love about your job?**

The support we get to innovate and explore new ways of doing things, the patients, my team and how much I laugh in a day.

**What do you find difficult?**

Getting people to understand the value of truly person-centred care in an acute setting, and convincing them that it is possible to deliver this consistently.

**What is your top priority?**

Ensuring our patients receive excellent care that addresses their needs.

**What has been your most formative career experience?**

Doing my master’s in medical anthropology. It changed the way I relate to my patients.

**What is the best lesson nursing has taught you?**

Listen to what people are really saying.

**What career advice would you give your younger self?**

Enjoy what you are doing, pursue what interests you, and consider that everything you do will teach you something useful.