NEXT RUNG OF THE LADDER

Find your next job by networking, online searches and reading the right journals, writes Elspeth Raisbeck

Finding the next suitable job can be a daunting prospect. To help focus on your career and objectives, and to hone your options, it is worth asking yourself these questions:

- What is your preferred geographical location and clinical area?
- Do you want to work in the NHS or in the independent or voluntary sectors?
- Do you want to use your nursing skills directly for patient care or are there other roles you would consider?
- Which posts will develop your clinical and subsequent career?
- Are there opportunities for nurses with your level of experience in your chosen area?
- What are your other considerations – promotion prospects, an interest in business, travel abroad and carer responsibilities?

Once these questions are answered, there are plenty of resources to help find the right job. Think about who can help. A clinical mentor or someone whom you have established a good relationship during your training may know of jobs on the horizon or may recommend someone else to offer advice.

Similarly, visit wards or areas that have inspired or motivated you and ask the manager there if there are likely to be imminent vacancies.

If you want to move out of your local area, what contacts in the new area could advise or help?

The personnel department of any organisation deals with advertising and selecting applicants for new or vacant posts. Visit or call them and ask who is responsible for filling vacancies in your areas of interest.

Make a note of that person's name so that when you call again, perhaps when a vacancy is advertised, that person will recognise your interest.

Ask to be kept informed of vacancies arising. Some human resource departments will notify interested applicants of all vacancies arising in a particular specialty or clinical area.

Local papers often run advertisements for nursing jobs in local hospitals and NHS trusts.

Online searching

Alternatively, the hospital's intranet or internet should hold the same information so that job descriptions and application forms can be accessed online.

Nursing journals such as Nursing Standard are easy to find at the newsagent, university or in hospital libraries, and some public libraries stock them. Job vacancies appear in their print pages and online editions.

Many websites specialise in nursing and health jobs. Others publish general vacancies with a specialist section for nurses and health workers.

The broadest investigation can be made by using a search engine and entering relevant search terms. For example, 'nurse jobs Sunderland' or 'nurse jobs general surgery Edinburgh' will identify only jobs in those areas.

Related words can be included by using '-' in front of a word, for example ‘~surgery’ will look for surgery, surgeon and clinic. Use the ‘~’ or ‘-’ signs to include or exclude items in searches – for example, ‘~surgery’ or ‘-GP’.

Remember to keep talking to tutors, friends, colleagues and hospital staff as this may open doors to possible jobs, as well as relieving some of the anxiety and frustration of searching.

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RESOURCE FILE

- RCN Bulletin online: www.rcnbulletinjobs.co.uk
- NHS jobs site: www.jobs.nhs.uk
- Jobs in NHS, pharmaceutical industry, research and voluntary organisations: www.jobsinhealth.co.uk
- Create a job search tailored to your own preferences: www.nursingtimes.net
- Jobs in health, social care and teaching: www.jobsinpublicsector.co.uk
- Careers and roles in the NHS: www.nhschoices.nhs.uk
- General job search sites with nursing and health-related sections: www.findajob.co.uk