Why community nursing is not just for older nurses

Newly qualified nurses can gain skills and confidence outside the hospital setting

At the end of my first year of nurse training, I had a clinical placement with a community nursing team. I loved working with them and went away from this placement thinking that this was the type of nursing I wanted to do.

But as I continued through my training, I heard various comments – from both teaching and clinical staff – discouraging me from entering this area of practice after qualifying.

Individually, I was told that community nursing is ‘for the more mature nurse’, while as students collectively we were encouraged to begin our careers in a hospital setting so we could ‘gain more skills’.

Protected time with patients

After graduating from De Montfort University, Leicester in January 2017 with a degree in adult nursing, I worked on an acute ward for older people, many of whom had dementia.

I realised quite quickly that this wasn’t the role for me. The patients needed my undivided attention, but short staffing meant I was constantly being pulled away to do other tasks and wasn’t able to spend the time with them that they needed. I often felt like I wasn’t doing a good job for my patients.

This prompted me to reflect on my community nursing placement, especially how the time and attention given to each patient was valued and protected. When a vacancy came up at a Leicester community nursing team, I jumped at the chance to work there.

I have been a community nurse at Leicestershire Partnership NHS Trust for two years now and love my job. I have learned so much more in this role than my previous one. I provide nursing care for patients who need it.
‘With my skill set I can deliver interventions in continence care, medicines management, maintenance of PICC lines, palliative care and wound care’

as tissue viability, palliative care and complex care nurses.

In my previous role I developed in-depth knowledge of one area of nursing; now my knowledge spans a range of topics. With my skill set I can deliver interventions in areas such as continence care, medicines management, maintenance of peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC) lines, palliative care and wound care.

This has increased my confidence and empowered me to use my judgement when providing care, not to mention offering the undeniable satisfaction that comes with delivering quality nursing care.

In community nursing, we develop great therapeutic relationships with patients and families, and they are always so thankful for our support. Caring for families is as important as caring for the patient; families often help care for their loved ones and it is important to consider their needs too.

Supported to develop
As a team, we often re-group at lunch time to discuss our mornings visits and raise any concerns, which also gives us the chance to support each other.

My managers are supportive and encourage me to continue to develop professionally. The numerous training opportunities provided by the trust, many of which I have completed, include wound care, lower limb training, diabetes management, palliative care and continence care.

Whether you are newly qualified or have years of experience, community nursing could be the option for you. No two days are the same and it’s a great opportunity for learning.

Find out about Your Future, a recruitment campaign for five major health and social care employers in Leicestershire and Rutland your-future.co.uk

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