Welcome to our hugely rewarding profession

Let’s support new nursing students to see they’ve chosen a career full of opportunity.

Congratulations on your decision to pursue a career in nursing, and welcome to one of the most diverse professions in the world. This journey will not be easy, but it will be worthwhile.

In starting your degree, you have committed to joining a community of more than 300,000 nurses and midwives UK-wide. Every one of us has had to endure the challenges of training to become a registered professional and if we can do it, so can you. It is important to know that you have our support.

Although there are 40,000 nurse vacancies across England alone, this does not mean that anyone can simply become a nurse. It takes an incredible amount of knowledge and skill to work with people from different backgrounds, ethnicities, cultures and walks of life.

Emotional intelligence

Nursing is often described as a vocation. While this may be true for some, I have never felt I was born to be a nurse. Emotional intelligence and an understanding of the evidence base are what make a great nurse. Emotional intelligence and courage and skills in advocacy.

A common misconception is that nursing is all about ‘care’ and caring. Nurses are some of the most dynamically skilled professionals and are so much more than care providers.

By Charlotte Jakab-Hall
staff nurse and chief nurse
junior fellow at Gloucestershire Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
We are researchers, quality improvers, policy makers, political influencers, health promoters and innovators.

The profession is facing difficulties that require a lot of focus and support. But nurses are stronger than ever.

Nursing students are a huge part of the solution. With the launch of the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) standards for pre-registration nurse education (see page 24), it is an exciting time. Skills once seen as advanced are now fundamental for new nursing students.

Students are expected to manage more complex healthcare packages and have an increased contribution to public health. They are leaders from the moment they start training, so it is essential they are nurtured.

I have a strong commitment to building the leadership of the future and encouraging healthcare staff at all levels to take on more leadership roles and advocate for our profession.

Privileged position
Having been a qualified adult nurse for just over 18 months, one of the most important things I have learned is never to take my position as a professional lightly. We are privileged to provide care to people when they are at their most vulnerable, one of the reasons why a career in nursing is so rewarding.

During your time as a student, you will experience many emotions. Studying and working long hours on placement, as well as working to earn money when possible, can take its toll.

It is important to remember to take care of yourself, exercising regularly and eating well, but also to enjoy your time off. Don’t forget to have fun – you are a student after all.

You will also face a rollercoaster of emotions, perhaps including imposter syndrome, where you will doubt your abilities. You may even question your decision to become a nurse. Recognising that this is normal is vital; we have all been there, and it is important to talk openly and honestly with your peers, tutors and placement mentors.

We are all here to make sure everyone is supported, and you will never be alone. You will see and feel things other people never get to experience, such as holding the hand of someone as they take their last breath, or celebrating with a patient who has just received good news about their health.

You are about to start the journey of a lifetime. Nursing gives you a real sense of purpose, and it is certainly never dull. So embrace the downs as well as enjoying the ups of your career – this will make you a better nurse.

More tips for students
rtni.com/welcome-to-nursing

-looking for cpd hours or a new job?

Hundreds of job opportunities for nurses of all levels, and HCAs at the RCNi Nursing Careers & Jobs Fair – the UK’s largest FREE nursing career development event

• Meet employers looking to fill immediate vacancies
• Complete CPD hours at our learning zone
• Hear a panel talk by nurse leaders
• Attend FREE CPD-accredited seminars and workshops on preceptorship, interview skills, CV writing and more
• Enter competitions to win exciting prizes

SUPPORTED BY
Nursing Standard

17-18 SEPTEMBER
BUSINESS DESIGN CENTRE, LONDON

Info and register
www.careersandjobsfair.com