



A Day in the Life of an OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH NURSE

'A Day in the Life of' is a series written by experienced community nurses for student nurses to show what working in the community is like.

Personal details

Name: Su Chantry

Job title: Occupational Health Manager at Formula 1 Williams Grand Prix Engineering

Location: Oxfordshire

1. What's a typical day for you?

There is no typical day when nursing in motorsport! I am responsible for the health management of our factory production staff and race team personnel. My predominant role is keeping employees safe and well in the workplace. I manage a small team of staff. I oversee the travel health of all race staff. I work closely with formula 1 medicine to manage risk and treatment at race events. My work includes travel health risk assessments, Covid testing, immunisations, consulate updates and I promote public health in the workplace. In addition to that I manage the responsibilities that come with being a business owner as I own my own independent occupational health business providing health management to a range of small and medium sized organisations. I also write medico legal reports as an occupational health nurse expert in Civil Law cases.

2. What has been your proudest moment in nursing so far?

My proudest moments in my nursing career are setting up my own Ltd company and seeing my business listed in Companies House. Seeing my name on the wing of our racing car in Thank you NHS livery, (see clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ef748GC8A9w&t=7s>). Being awarded a Queen's Nurse award is a very proud milestone in my career, particularly as I was one of the first cohort of occupational health nurses to receive the award.

3. What skills set would you expect a student nurse to bring to the role of community nursing?

Occupational health is a varied community nursing role. In order to give the best possible care you have to understand all elements of a business, its employees, the work they do and company culture, from the executives to the office staff to the lorry drivers. You have to be able to communicate fluently at all levels and understand what the health needs of that organisation and its employees are. Nursing's general knowledge base is integral to what we do, occupational health nursing draws on all backgrounds, from mental health nursing to acute care. Workplace health is critical, because most people spend most of their life at work. Public health awareness is helpful. Good work is beneficial to health.

4. What do you wish you'd known before you started working in the community?

I wish I had realised I could set up as an independent business in occupational health earlier in my career. The variety of roles in the community is so varied. Think outside the NHS boundaries – there are multiple opportunities in occupational health, NHS, public and private sectors all need workplace health management.

5. Any advice for aspiring community nurses?

Look outside the box. Community nursing is varied and includes nursing the workforce in employment settings - a working population is a community in its own entity. Employment is an important factor for health, directly and indirectly making an impact on the individual, their families and communities. Unemployment is associated with an increased risk of mortality and morbidity, including limiting illness, cardiovascular disease, poor mental health, suicide, and health-damaging behaviours. Workplace health is promoting and managing the health and wellbeing of staff and includes managing sickness absence and presenteeism. Workplace health interventions can be managed dynamically in occupational health.

The government are exploring an expanded role for occupational health and where it is placed within a broader collaborative and multidisciplinary service. Ultimately occupational health will be a service that should be available to all, whether they are entering work, seeking to stay in work, or trying to return to work without delay in the wake of illness or injury. This is the time to be looking into occupational health nursing as a role in the community: it is an ever-evolving speciality. Be continually aware of the impact of social and environmental factors on health. Good health can best be maintained by the provision of healthcare in the community, and the delivery of that healthcare needs to be sensitive to the patient's circumstances in the home, at work and in society.

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📖 Think outside the NHS boundaries.
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