



A Day in the Life of a DISTRICT NURSE

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

Personal details

Name: Gail Goddard

Job title: District Nurse Team Manager/ Practice Supervisor/ Practice Assessor/ Queen's Nurse

Location: London

1. What's a typical day for you?

I am currently working with two Community Nursing Teams (CNT) and with three Newly Qualified Nurses (NQNs). I am semi-retired so work three days a week one day with each of the NQNs. On arrival, I work with the NQN to review her list of patients for that day. We check the patients notes together, work out a plan to complete the visits and think about the care we are expecting to give. I then accompany the NQN on her visits using each visit as a learning opportunity for the NQN to develop a deeper understanding of the care which is needed by the patient, reflecting as we go. This enables the NQN to visit quite complex patients while being supported by an experienced senior nurse. My whole aim is for the NQN to develop and learn, gain confidence and competence and enjoy the experience. I also act as a critical friend to both the NQN and the CNT as I feedback any gaps in learning or care and so have a positive impact on the rest of the team as well.

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

My proudest moment was being awarded the QN title in 2013. This has opened my world literally and given me so many opportunities to develop and to use my voice to speak up for community nursing. As a result, I am a steering group member of the RCN District and Community Nursing forum and take an active role in work of the QNI e.g., this project and The Expert Nurses group for Long Covid.

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

As most of the students we have are second year student nurses who have never experienced community nursing before I would not necessarily expect them to have appropriate clinical skills. What I would expect to see is a willingness to learn and take advantage of every opportunity offered to them using their soft skills of communication, caring, compassion and reflection to get the most out of their placement.

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

I wish I had known how complex and varied community nursing is. Just what a specialism it is. How privileged we are to be welcomed into people's homes and lives at the best and worst of times. I would have liked sat navs to be available when I started 31 years ago as that would have helped a lot as well.

5. Any advice for aspiring community nurses?

Do it. Be courageous and take the leap. It was the best decision I ever made and have not looked back. You can come out and work in the community as a newly qualified nurse. You do not have to work in a hospital for a couple of years first. It will be tough and steep learning curve but when you look back after your first year, you will be so proud of the things that you have learnt and experienced. Make links with local teams, ask to shadow them, join twitter, and follow community-based people to keep up to date with what is going on and request community as your final placement in your third year so you have 12 weeks to decide if it is for you or not.



Find out more:

www.qni.org.uk/students

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Gail Goddard