

'Your life in my hands' – my career route...

I guess I am what you would call an 'old school' trained nurse. To clarify I mean my training was a while ago and the programme of training was different. It was at United Midlands College for Nursing and Midwifery based on site at Sandwell General Hospital in the Black Country – told you it was a while ago! I was exposed to all fields of nursing and decided on adult nursing.

I was fortunate to get a job working on the ward I wanted when I qualified – Priory 4 Sandwell General Hospital which was elderly care. Although my first choice I some discovered shift work, especially nights, were not for me! So I guess I fell into Community and Primary Care Nursing as my alternative to this. It was the BEST decision of my clinical career!

MY first job was as a Community Staff Nurse caring for patients' in their own homes. Well for a girl with no sense of direction (and pre SAT NAV) that was a challenge - my favourite bed time reading became my A to Z... the paper vision of a SAT NAV! .....

I never looked back – my skill set expanded so much – I could hardly keep up with it. Whatever nursing needs patients' had we had to develop the skills to ensure they could stay at home and manage those needs. It was both challenging and exciting every day – each visit was unique! You may have been doing the same 'skill' but no two people / households / families were ever the same...

After a time – I put my tired and dog eared A to Z away and became a Practice Nurse based in the surgery. I was a Community Staff Nurse for the surgery already so started out my doing the occasional clinic. Again wow - Skill overload! The role is so diverse that I found myself treating patients from all ages 'cradle to grave' doing skills I would never of considered in my scope of practice (baby immunisations, ear syringing to name a couple).

In both of these roles I was autonomous and making clinic decisions about patient care, honing in on my assessment and nursing process skills every single patient contact – I loved it!

My passion for non-acute setting nursing never changed and I truly believe that my career development was accelerated due to the environment I was working in. I did my BSc Nursing degree, became one of the first wave of nurse prescribers and worked in a range of community based positions (within a Social Work team and as a Specialist Multiple Sclerosis Nurse) which were all born out of my move into Community and Primary Care Nursing.

I would say I am a confident and chatty person but working in these settings also definitely developed my 'person; skills to enable me to make the move into Nursing Education where these 2Cs are essential.