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**Case study**

Name: Diane Foster

Job title: Staff Nurse

I am a Registered Nurse and it is something that I always wanted to be from a young child. I can’t remember ever wanting to do anything else. I always believed that it was something that I could never achieve as I didn’t have enough qualifications to do it when I left school. I found out from a friend who was training to be a Registered Nurse at the time that I could apply to do my SEN training (State Enrolled Nurse). I did an entrance exam and got accepted onto the two year course. Gradually as the Enrolled Nurse course was phased out and replaced with just one level of Registered Nurse, I did a one year conversion course to get my Staff Nurse qualification. Then I was able to do post graduate courses to enhance my role, such as teaching and assessing to enable me to mentor Student Nurses as well as other specialised courses that equipped me to fulfil my role with increased knowledge and understanding in whatever area I was working throughout my career. I feel very privileged to be in this profession.

**What did your early career look like?**

Things were very different when I started my nursing career. It didn’t have the professional status that it does now. I have always enjoyed being at the bedside and have never wanted to move up into a management position. The structure of nursing and the pathway into it has altered completely since I first began but if you asked me if I had my time again would I still do it I would most definitely say yes. I really cannot imagine having done anything different as a career. I have met the most wonderful and supportive colleagues, peers and formed genuinely good friendships with many people; not just nurses but within the multi-disciplinary team of staff that I have had the pleasure of working with. These are people dedicated to their jobs too with genuine compassion for delivering the best possible patient care often at great sacrifice of their own time and energy as the one thing this job isn’t is 9 till 5. It will challenge you emotionally, physically and mentally but it is well worth the effort.

**How did you become a Staff Nurse?**

When I first left school and took a job as a receptionist/typist/telephonist in a printing company. I enjoyed it but my mind was always on doing my nurse training once I turned eighteen and was old enough to apply to do it.

I did enjoy school but I never really excelled in much apart from English and French language, English literature, drama and dance. I tended to be ‘Miss Average’ at everything else and didn’t achieve great grades in my exams.

**What is a typical day as a Staff Nurse?**

Assessing the needs of patients, planning and implementing care by evaluating it regularly. Depending on what area that you work in will determine how your working day is structured but usually you would have your own patients to care for and be their named nurse and you would be responsible for giving all care in a holistic manner usually with continuity of that patient care from one shift to the next. In this model of nursing you can really get to know the patients in your care and build a relationship of trust between you and them. This is good for the patient and gives them confidence in you as their nurse and their advocate when they are at their most vulnerable. It is also 24 hour care so it can be handed over to the nurse on the next shift with a seamless flow. This is a much preferred model when compared with the task orientated model that existed when I first started nursing for example. This is what makes the job so rewarding.

**Do you have any words of encouragement for anyone thinking about a career in health and social care?**

I would say if it is truly what you want to do it go for it. Nursing gives true satisfaction and reward. It is a privileged position to be in and at times very humbling. It is hard work, challenging and difficult at times (quite often actually) so it isn’t for the faint or half hearted. You must be totally committed to it as it will take all you have got and all you are prepared to give, but it is worth it and you will get back from it far more than you put in by way of career fulfilment. The opportunities to develop and progress are plentiful. You will need to be dedicated and passionate and most of all compassionate if you are to consider a career in nursing. If you have those attributes along with enthusiasm and a desire to make a difference to the lives of those you care for then this is a career for you. I hope that you enjoy it every bit as much as I do.