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**Case study**

Name: Louise Halford

Job title: Clinical Quality Assurance Manager

**What role/ profession are you in?**

I am a registered adult nurse and I currently work for a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) in a quality assurance and improvement role.

My mum was a nurse so I guess it was in the genes but I tried a few other jobs such as sales and hospitality before committing to the nursing profession. I started my health care journey as a healthcare assistant and worked in a variety of care home and hospital settings before deciding that I wanted to undertake my nurse training.

I will never forget how daunting it felt to don my royal blue staff nurse uniform for the first time when only 24 hours earlier I had been wearing my student stripes! All of a sudden the accountability and responsibility hit me.

I have had a really interesting and varied career path. I came into nursing wanting to return to the care home sector but I became drawn to the buzz of a busy high dependency acute nursing environment so the first 4 years of my post registration career were spent in cardiothoracic surgery. I then spent around 8 years in the independent sector and this gave me a huge amount of diverse experience including surgical and medical.

I spent a short time as an agency nurse which again offered a variety of diverse experience before I returned to the NHS working as a renal nurse in haemodialysis. I never would have foreseen myself working in a commissioning environment but a role came up working in quality assurance and improvement and I saw this as an opportunity to be able to influence greater change and improvement within healthcare. I am fortunate to have met and work with a fantastic team of people and together I hope we are able to make changes and improvements that make things better for those needing to receive healthcare.

**What is a typical day as a Clinical Quality Assurance Manager?**

The thing I love about my role and my profession is that there is no typical day. Each day is different and I am privileged to meet so many people I would not otherwise cross paths with. My role involves offering clinical advice and support to the team, ensuring that safety, effectiveness of care and patient experience are at the heart of the services we currently commission and deliver and the future commissioning decisions our organisation makes.

I am involved in quality visits and supporting providers of healthcare to identify learning opportunities and implement quality improvements. I have organised training events, supported care homes, contributed to procurement of new services and been involved in ensuring resources are used responsibly whilst ensuring complex individual healthcare packages of care meet people’s needs.

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

My advice is that this career is not for the faint hearted! The hours can be long and demanding. Often it is hard to take breaks, resources are limited and there can be some difficult and sad moments when you support people through life changing situations but nursing is also an incredibly rewarding profession where you really do get the opportunity to make a difference and help people. All the hard work and effort will pay off and there are a huge amount of career progression opportunities and so many areas that you can specialise in now which makes this a really interesting and fulfilling profession to follow.