



Case study

Name: Karen Hebborn

Job title: Pre-Assessment Nurse

What was your career journey prior to training to be a nurse?

If I am honest I felt I struggled at school due to mild dyslexia. When I left school at the age of 16, I worked eight years in a hosiery factory. I left the factory to have a family and worked part time doing different jobs ranging from shop assistant to childminder. I developed an interest in nursing through personal circumstances but not being academic it was just a dream. At the age of 32 I embarked on a college course in Beauty Therapy and became self-employed for 10 years. I was inspired and encouraged by a few of my clients who were nurses and decided to take the plunge and train to be a Nurse. I completed a course called "Access to Nursing" to gain 'A' level equivalent qualifications and secure a place at De Montfort University to do my nurse training over 3 years.

How did you become a Pre-Assessment Nurse?

I changed career and trained to be an Adult Registered Nurse at the age of 43 and after 3 years of training started my first nursing role on a Cardiac Surgery ward. I chose Cardiology, this is the speciality that deals with diseases and abnormalities of the heart, as my preferred speciality because it was a subject I could understand and also had a personal interest as my mother had undergone heart surgery twice in her lifetime.

I took a 12 month secondment working as a pre-assessment nurse. Secondments are a brilliant way to learn about different roles and develop a career. At the end of the secondment I worked as an anticoagulation nurse specialist, this role monitors people taking medication to thin their blood. I also worked in Endoscopy where a long thin tube called an endoscope is inserted into body to observe internal organ tissue.

When a permanent part-time Nurse position became vacant in the Pre-Assessment clinic I applied, and was so thrilled when I was successful. This is the role I am in today

What did your early career look like?

I started working as a Nurse on a ward in Cardiac Surgery and progressed to a more senior nursing position. I stayed there for 12 years. When I left Cardiac Surgery I was a Deputy Sister and moved to Cardiology.

What is a typical day as a Pre-Assessment Nurse?

Every day is very different as it reflects what our patient's need, however a typical day for me includes:

- Having in-depth consultations with patients prior to cardiac surgery or cardiology procedures helping them to understand what will happen, ensure they are medically fit for surgery/procedure and try to answer any questions or allay any worries they may have
- Advising patients about any medication they are taking
- Assessing patient observations, ECG Reports and their overall health
- Chasing up test results and acting on any abnormalities.

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

It doesn't matter how old you are when you start your Nurse training, or how well you got on at school. Adult Education is really different and supportive.

To find out more - www.your-future.co.uk v2