



My Career Story

Alison Jones

Joint Professional Education Manager and International Recruitment Programme Lead (GRH/CGH)

I had no intention of being a nurse. I wasn't really sure what I wanted to do, so I decided to stay on at school in the 6th form to gain some extra qualifications whilst thinking things over. I'd always been involved in various clubs at school, had enjoyed teaching and helping others and considered being a primary school teacher. My mum who was working in a nursing home at the time, suggested I do some voluntary work to gain experience of dealing with different age groups. So at the age of 15, I started working voluntarily as an HCA and was soon offered a job working evenings and weekends. I found this was something I really enjoyed and knowing I was helping others was very rewarding.

In 1987 I left school to do a pre-nursing course at Stroud College before applying for and starting my nurse training in Torquay. After 6 months, I decided Torquay wasn't for me and applied to Gloucester Royal Hospital which is nearer to home. I was accepted for my training and where I have now been working as a trained nurse for the last 26 years. I've worked within different specialities on both the Gloucester and Cheltenham sites from orthopaedics, day surgery, intermediate and major surgery, breast care, vascular to urology. I am definitely more of a surgical nurse.

In 1998, I reduced my hours to part-time to have a family but was still determined to use my skills, just in a different way. I sold Avon products in the evenings for a while and when the local college was running a free Diploma in Pre-School practice course I decided to do it. I used this qualification to become the Chair of a local playgroup and worked there on my 'days off'. I could take my sons there and was soon running a toddler group on a Friday.

I took on various link nurse roles whilst on the wards from Breast Care Link Nurse, Blood Hound Champion, Fire Warden and Key Mentor for students developing teaching materials which could be used by both students and colleagues. We each undertook teaching sessions and delivered them to colleagues on our ward and anyone from other wards who wished to attend. This was rather daunting at first but helped me to develop my confidence, teaching skills as well as network with different colleagues from within the hospital.

In 2015, I was looking for a new challenge and was asked to do bank work by the Professional Education Manager who had been a previous student of mine. I seized this opportunity and when a full-time position for the Overseas Professional Educational Practitioner came up I applied and was successful. This was a new role in the Trust and at a time when the NMC were changing their programmes for our International colleagues. This was challenging but with the support of my colleagues the programme was developed and we have now helped over 200 nurses to gain their nurse registration within the UK. Being able to see these nurses flourish and gain high positions within the Trust is just great and makes my job so worthwhile.

I applied for the Professional Manager's position in 2019. I was successful and now manage a fantastic team with Steph and teach the OSCE programme with Liz. It is never dull and each day brings a new challenge. Being able to work alongside such talented and professional colleagues is a privilege and as they say, every day is a school day.

