

<i>Name</i>	Chris Sharp
<i>How long have you been a nurse?</i>	28 years
<i>What inspired you to be a nurse?</i>	I always knew I wanted to work closely with people. As a child I wanted to become a policeman, so much so I was in the first intake of a new initiative and became a voluntary police cadet in Peterborough in the mid-1980s. However, in my late teens I decided that nursing seemed a better career and looked at becoming a nurse.
<i>How did you get into this career? What steps did it take since leaving school?</i>	I applied to become a nurse in 1990 and got accepted to the Charles Frears School of Nursing in Leicester on the understanding I got some work experience in a hospital. So, I became a volunteer at one of the Peterborough sites every Saturday going round a care of the elderly ward serving refreshments and chatting to patients.
<i>Can you tell us a bit about the training you undertook for your role?</i>	By the time I started nurse training, the national training programme had changed from the traditional model to Project 2000. I started in April 1992. I was in the second intake of the programme, so lecturers were still adjusting to delivering the new model whilst supporting students finishing the training. One of the main differences compared to the previous nurse programme allowed students to become supernumerary and was not counted in the numbers.....which didn't mean we just watched, it meant spending time with our mentors and getting a better understanding of the rationale of doing things.....I sometimes wonder whether this was the birth of the five whys? As I was always inquisitive from the start.....this was also the first time I found out about Infection Control....later to become Infection Prevention and Control. I still remember the time we all had to wash our hands using a bowl of water and a bar of soap. When I qualified, I worked in London on a medical ward which also looked after patients with HIV and this stemmed my interest in blood borne viruses which led me to become the ward's Link Nurse for Infection Control.
<i>What's been the highlight of your career so far?</i>	Looking back over the years, I have so many fond memories in my nursing career. The first one is receiving my nurse qualification and attending my graduation

	<p>with my proud parents in the audience and knowing that the care I gave made a difference to the person and their families both within hospital and community settings.</p> <p>From an IPaC perspective again there are loads I am proud of and far too many to list in detail. However, I have listed some below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a time where each trust did their own thing, I helped deliver a successful and positive change in the enteral feeding programme with the support of the dietetics teams around Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.</li> <li>• Receiving a national and international award following a review of our waste strategy and then presenting our project at Infection Prevention Society's (IPS) annual conference.</li> <li>• Being chair of the East of England's Infection Control meetings for several years prior to becoming part of the national society.</li> <li>• Holding numerous branch lead roles for the East of England branch of IPS.</li> <li>• Helping to shape a different type of staff flu vaccination programme for the Trust (away from going to occupational health clinics).</li> <li>• Being able to vaccinate colleagues who have a genuine fear of needles.</li> <li>• Seeing previous IPaC team members develop and move onto new roles.</li> <li>• And I suppose more recently, helping us all through the last few years of Covid. I can truly say that the Trust's IPaC team wasn't just a couple of specialist staff, it was everyone.</li> <li>• Meeting the woman who became my wife – I wouldn't have met her if we both hadn't been nurses within Infection Prevention and Control.</li> </ul>
<p><i>What do you like most about being a nurse?</i></p>	<p>Knowing that I have made a difference and helping people to be their best.</p>
<p><i>What's the most challenging part of being a nurse?</i></p>	<p>I can truly say over the last few years, there have been a number of challenges I have</p>

	<p>had to face. Whether this was supporting colleagues during the biggest global pandemic, learning to adopt changed practices (especially having to work remotely using new IT software). Recognising that we were all working to do our best during unprecedented times</p>
<p><i>What are the main skills needed to do your role?</i></p>	<p>IPaC issues can be very worrying for everyone where there is a level of uncertainty about organisms (including viruses), so the skills I feel are needed for my role are (which should be very similar to most people) are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Being approachable</li> <li>• Respecting everyone</li> <li>• Being able to communicate effectively (everyone has a voice and opinions)</li> <li>• Encouraging staff involvement</li> </ul> <p>As Head of IPaC, I believe you need a variety of leadership skills, at both operational and strategic levels, as well as the ability to work with colleagues translating national guidelines (often hospital orientated) into Trust policies / Standard Operational Procedures.</p>
<p><i>Do you have any advice for the next generation of nurses?</i></p>	<p>I was brought up to respect everyone and treat everyone the same as we should all have the same opportunities. Allow yourself time to step back and breathe.</p> <p>I have always treated everyone with the same level of respect, always be inquisitive....never be afraid to use the word....why? (such a powerful word in my opinion).....unless of course it's aimed at myself.</p> <p>Learn to think critical.....but don't be critical. Be honest to yourself and others, reflect on things that went well and not so well.....believe me we've all got good and stories we reflect on....and it's what we do with them that helps deliver our outstanding service.</p> <p>Don't be shy to speak up as there really isn't a stupid question, you may well be seeing things from a different perspective. Embrace new and emerging technology.</p>
<p><i>My wish for the future of nursing is...</i></p>	<p>Obviously, we will always be hoping to get an increased number of nurses (like all professions).....Over the 28 years that I</p>

	<p>have been qualified, I have seen many changes in healthcare but what hasn't changed is the desire to provide optimal care in a safe environment (this includes appropriately skilled staff). We continue to look at different approaches to looking after patients and often their carer(s), working alongside a multitude of agencies with the same common goal.</p>
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