

<i>Name</i>	Julia McLean
<i>How long have you been a nurse?</i>	43 years
<i>What inspired you to be a nurse?</i>	It was an inner feeling I can't explain, I tried to ignore it for several years, I just felt I would never be able to do an injection, that held me back from applying, but in the end, I had to give in and go for it. In 1980 I started my training and within the first month I gave my first injection, I had such a good mentor that explained it so well it was not the problem I thought it would be and I never looked back.
<i>How did you get into this career? What steps did it take since leaving school?</i>	I left school with no qualifications, I had quite severe dyslexia which really held me back at school. I left school at 15 and worked in retail for 4 years, this life experience helped me see who I was and my abilities. I initially trained as an Enrolled Nurse for which I had to do a pre-training test. I trained at Addenbrooke's Hospital.
<i>Can you tell us a bit about the training you undertook for your role?</i>	After that initial 2-year training I went to St Ormond Street Hospital in London to complete a paediatric nursing course, I then returned to Addenbrooke's and whilst working on the paediatric ward I went to evening classes to get some O levels, my aim now was to do my registered nurse training. I completed my RGN training in 1988 and returned to working with children. In 1991 I completed further training to become a health visitor.
<i>What's been the highlight of your career so far?</i>	There have been too many to actually pin point one in particular, but I think I will go with becoming a Fellow of the Institute of Health Visiting, that was very special because I felt I had come so far from that girl who was not sure if she could do the job, the girl that was told 'Go work in a shop, that's all you're capable of'!
<i>What do you like most about being a nurse?</i>	Everything, in those first years when I was single, I loved it so much it consumed me. I truly believe I was so very lucky to find my niche in life, how many people can say that about their job. I guess the fact is that nursing is so varied, every day is different, every patient or client is too, so there is constant interest and positive challenge. Alongside constant learning.
<i>What's the most challenging part of being a nurse?</i>	Today there are lots of things that take you away from patient facing so you often feel that you are more of an author than a care

	<p>giver. Technology is amazing, but I can see if often gets in the way of that human-to-human conversation. Technology often means less time to talk to the patient to find out, how they are really feeling. As well as this, most NHS services are becoming task orientated rather than holistic, which doesn't seem to fit the 'make every contact count' initiative.</p>
<p><i>What are the main skills needed to do your role?</i></p>	<p>Communication skills. Listening skills. Caring about others Empowerment Interest, having a curious mind! So you can ask the right questions Ability to work with others or on your own. Ability to accept when you are wrong.</p>
<p><i>Do you have any advice for the next generation of nurses?</i></p>	<p>You never stop learning and the job is what you make it, be inspired by what you see and always attempt to improve your skills and the service you are working in. We are here to improve outcomes for patients and clients or in management to support and enable.</p>
<p><i>My wish for the future of nursing is...</i></p>	<p>It is patient focused. That those who like me left school without O' or A' Levels, there is a route into nursing, as there are many who would make excellent registered nurses and may, like me, progress within the nurse arena, to become something they only dreamed of.</p>