

<i>Name</i>	Nicky Bloye-Cook
<i>How long have you been a nurse?</i>	32 years
<i>What inspired you to be a nurse?</i>	Although it sounds a cliché, I wanted to care for and look after people! I still do, whether it be professionally, as a mum, daughter, partner or friend! Although I can be quiet (many would disagree with that!), I have been described as the heart of a group on several occasions!
<i>How did you get into this career? What steps did it take since leaving school?</i>	I had always wanted to be a nurse and applied for the training in my A Level years. I was keen to move away from home, so chose a London hospital.
<i>Can you tell us a bit about the training you undertook for your role?</i>	As I trained 'back in the day', I trained solely at St Thomas' Hospital, London, before the days of university training! We did 3 month blocks of practical and theory, and I had a wealth of different experiences both in hospital and in the community. I also got into many scrapes which my friends still remind me about!
<i>What's been the highlight of your career so far?</i>	My career has been a series of lightbulb moments! I loved sexual health, where I started in the 1990s, because HIV and AIDS was burgeoning and was a new and exciting field both clinically and psychologically. I moved into community nursing when I became a mum and my newfound maternal instinct made me a much better nurse – I learnt to truly care. The public health agenda in the form of the immunisation field has kept my fires burning in recent years and took me to the establishment of the Covid large-scale vaccination service for the Trust. Although it took over my life for two years, it was exciting, challenging, ground-breaking and a huge part of our history. I am excited to now be shaping a new, corporate nursing role within the Trust. I see this as an opportunity to champion nurses, the nursing profession and contribute to shaping the future of nursing.
<i>What do you like most about being a nurse?</i>	Although I am a confirmed introvert, I love meeting and learning from people from diverse walks of life, both as colleagues as well as

	<p>patients and carers. Every day is a learning opportunity and nursing allows me to seize the day.</p> <p>Caring for people and working to make a real difference is most important to me.</p>
<p><i>What's the most challenging part of being a nurse?</i></p>	<p>Witnessing the low morale of the nursing profession is very challenging at the moment. It is sad that experienced, skilled nurses are leaving as a result of burnout, workforce shortages, lack of support and the cost-of-living crisis.</p>
<p><i>What are the main skills needed to do your role?</i></p>	<p>Genuine interest in people  Patience  Ambition  Compassion  Self-awareness and mental agility</p>
<p><i>Do you have any advice for the next generation of nurses?</i></p>	<p>Be proud of your profession, don't say "I'm only a nurse". Remember that you are at the centre of care and the bedrock of the NHS. You don't have to be a hands-on nurse to be a valued nurse – there are many other avenues for nursing.</p>
<p><i>My wish for the future of nursing is...</i></p>	<p>Nurses to be recognised for their true value in society; the respect rightly earned during the pandemic continues. Nurses continue to extend their role and scope in order to address health inequalities and be the voice of the population they serve.</p>