

<i>Name</i>	Samina Akhtar
<i>How long have you been a nurse?</i>	I have been a nurse for 18 years.
<i>What inspired you to be a nurse?</i>	I have always been willing to help and support people by caring for them and aspired to work in healthcare. I always felt I could make a difference in supporting my community by making valuable contributions in improving and access to health care.
<i>How did you get into this career? What steps did it take since leaving school?</i>	When I left school, I went to sixth form college and studied for my A levels in Chemistry, Biology and Mathematics. As I wanted to go into healthcare, but I was not sure which profession in particular I wanted to go into, I felt these were the most appropriate options to take. During college, myself and my fellow students attended a shadowing experience at the local hospital to observe the role of the nurse. I felt this was something that I felt inclined towards and felt more passionate about going into nursing. I applied for adult nursing at university after college.
<i>Can you tell us a bit about the training you undertook for your role?</i>	I completed the three-year diploma to qualify as an Adult General Nurse, which took three years, and qualified in 2005. My final management placement was in the community with the district nursing team. I preferred community nursing over acute care, so I applied for a job in the hospital and in the community. In 2012, I started my postgraduate diploma at Master's level to qualify as a specialist community public health nurse (SCPHN), Health Visitor. I have been working for the 0-19 team ever since then and am currently Practice Lead.
<i>What's been the highlight of your career so far?</i>	The highlight of my career was progressing from being a band 5 staff nurse to qualifying as a health visitor for further progression as a band 6. Further to this, my progression onto the Practice Lead role has also been another highlight, as I am invested in supporting the learning and professional development needs of my colleagues and students that attend placement in our service. Other highlights have included developing my own personal career aspirations through attending leadership

	<p>courses such as Step On Up and Chrysalis courses.</p> <p>During the Covid-19 pandemic, I received nominations from various members of staff and an award for 'Best supporting professional' for my support for students' learning and training to staff.</p>
<i>What do you like most about being a nurse?</i>	<p>I enjoy the day-to-day patient interaction and providing personalised care to people in the community to ensure that their needs are met. Relationship building with my colleagues and with service users alike, is also something I most enjoy.</p>
<i>What's the most challenging part of being a nurse?</i>	<p>Time and staffing have always been a challenge. Rising to the challenge and prioritising has been a skill that I have mastered over the years.</p> <p>Finding the right care, at the right time for the right patient can sometimes be a challenge, due to different services being available in different areas.</p>
<i>What are the main skills needed to do your role?</i>	<p>Interpersonal, communication skills. Planning, assessing, evaluating care of service users, as well as reviewing the care to ensure that it's tailored to the changing needs of the service user and to the population and community. Being a reflective practitioner is also a very important skill required for my role. Showing empathy, compassion and care to colleagues and service users.</p>
<i>Do you have any advice for the next generation of nurses?</i>	<p>Show compassion and empathy, it always shows and patients / services users notice. Be a reflective practitioner, challenge yourself to be your best and do your best. Always be present and provide personalised care to individual service user's needs.</p>
<i>My wish for the future of nursing is...</i>	<p>For nurses to become more autonomous in their practice, as leaders of the profession. For nurses to make a big difference in how services are delivered and patient experience to be improved through compassion, empathy and hard work. For nurses to be at the forefront of making decisions on patient care, to become advocates for service users / patients.</p>

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