



# A Day in the Life of a.. **PRACTICE NURSE**

**‘A Day in the Life of’ is a series written by experienced community nurses for student nurses to show what working in the community is like.**

## **Personal details**

**Name:** Lorraine Clarke

**Job title:** Specialist Practitioner

**Location:** West Midlands

## **1. What's a typical day for you?**

A typical day starts at 8.30 with daily immunisation fridge checks, looking at my scheduled appointments and checking any blood results tasked to me. The first patient arrives at 8.45 with the morning clinic scheduled to finish around 12 during which I can have a mix of face to face or telephone consultations. As the senior nurse managing a lot of long term conditions, my morning mainly involves seeing patients with Type 2 Diabetes, providing essential care, phlebotomy, discussing recent blood results or stepping up treatment. Before the afternoon session, there may be telephone consultations or dressings to perform. Lunch is usually spent catching up with emails or training. The afternoon session may be a mix of asthma reviews, cervical screening or BP checks and tends to finish around 6pm. Practice nursing is a varied role where anything can walk through the door.

## **2. What has been your proudest moment in nursing so far?**

Becoming a Queens Nurse in 2018. This was a humbling experience where I had to ask patients to provide a reference explaining why they felt I deserved to be a Queens Nurse as well as having to explain myself why I was a suitable candidate. For someone who is not comfortable accepting praise this was very difficult to do. Attending the ceremony in London was fantastic, spending time with a diverse range of nurses and getting to see what the QNI has been doing across the country.

## **3. What skills set would you expect a student nurse to bring to the role of community nursing?**

Firstly, a basic understanding of what the Practice Nurse role is and how GP land works including where it sits within the NHS as its very different to hospital nursing. Secondly, some basic nursing skills which can be built on during their time within our setting. An ability to communicate on a one to one basis with nursing colleagues and patients. Practice Nursing is a speciality in its own right where interacting with a wide range of people is vital in the development of this unique relationship.

## **4. What do you wish you'd known before you started working in the community?**

EVERYTHING! I came from a background of 10 years of gynae ward nursing so walking into GP surgery where anything could walk in was very scary. It was a huge learning curve for me having to learn new skills such as phlebotomy and cervical smears as well as 'common' conditions such as Diabetes, asthma and COPD. However, as the years rolled on (I've been a Practice Nurse for 20 years), I have undertaken diplomas and a specialist practitioner degree as well as completing the independent Prescribing qualification and love every minute of my job.

## **5. Any advice for aspiring community nurses?**

Jump on board... You'll love it. If you are interested, get a placement in a GP practice to see what we do. My experience is some university lecturers are unsure of our role and often do not see it as a viable option for the newly qualified. Practice nursing is a fantastic opportunity with many funded university courses available to help you develop the new skills required and many fantastic mentors available to support you. It offers a different type of nursing, in a different setting, caring for patients from birth to end of life with a variety of conditions who in the main are 'well' when they come to see you.



Find out more:

**[www.qni.org.uk/students](http://www.qni.org.uk/students)**

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**You'll love it!**

Lorraine Clarke