



A Day in the Life of a **COMMUNITY MATRON**

'A Day in the Life of' is a series written by experienced community nurses for student nurses to see what life in the community is like.

Personal details

Name: Kim Grimmer QN
Job title: Matron Specialist Community Services
Location: Swindon

1. What's a typical day for you?

A typical day for me starts with a check in with the teams. I look after 4 specialist services in the community and not every team is at the base I work from so some contact is by phone or email. Then it's time to work through emails and check calendar. I usually have a few meetings/121s/appraisals, so I need to make sure I have the preparation done. Every day at 12pm I chair the 'Safety Huddle' where senior clinicians review the significant events that have been recorded in the past 24 hours

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

There have been a few but I think the proudest moment was passing out as a Nursing Officer in the Princess Mary's Royal Air Force Nursing Service at RAF Cranwell. I had previously joined the RAF Reservists and enjoyed the experience so much I decided to join the regular RAF. It turned out to be a really interesting and enjoyable 4 years where I would experience nursing like nowhere else. In particular the completion of the Aeromedical Evacuation Course was a real high where I was able to bring patients home from Canada, Kosovo, Cyprus, The Falkland Islands and Ascension Island.

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

I would expect a student to bring an open and enquiring mind. I think there are lots of preconceived ideas about nursing in the community and some of them are true but some of them are not. Ask lots of questions of your mentor and all the nurses and HPs you work with as well as your patients. As with any placement it's always useful to do some homework and there's plenty of information out there to pre read on the QNI site, RCN or even social media such as Twitter (my favourite place to get more info!)

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

I wish I had known just how multi skilled community nurses need to be to provide quality care for their patients. I wish I had appreciated the enormity of community nursing, there is no bed count or appointments, community nursing cannot close when it is full. It's like a giant jigsaw every day where we have to fit all the pieces together in order to give the patients the right care by the right person with the right skills and knowledge.

5. Any advice for aspiring community nurses?

Try not to be influenced by the opinions of others who speak without any community experience of their own, or at least come and experience it yourself before you make your mind up. Lots of community providers will be happy to offer you a shadow shift with a community nurse. It's definitely a very different way of nursing and it's not for everyone but if it is for you, it can be a very rewarding career move. You can choose to take it to whatever level you want to with advanced practice on offer, management, non-medical prescribing or a combination of it all.

I have found there is a fabulous community nurse team spirit, I am sure you will find that locally but also nationally. There are many forums and groups on social media welcoming and supporting fellow community nurses with plenty of opportunity to get involved at local, regional and national levels.

As with any type of nursing, community nursing is hard work and some days will be harder than others so it is important you get the right work life balance and take full advantage of the support that is on offer to you from your employer.



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**Find out more:
www.qni.org.uk/students**

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