

International Recruitment to the Community

CASE STUDY

2023/#1



Interview with Ananthu Ashok

Ananthu gained his qualification from Rajiv Gandhi University, India in 2014. Ananthu’s nursing graduation in India covered adult, mental health, and Paediatric. This provided him with a broad perspective of nursing enabling him to work in a variety of settings such as Cardiology (Adult, Paediatric), Mental Health, Neurology, Vascular, Geriatric, Dementia care, and Community Rehabilitation.

Ananthu worked in Malta for three years where he worked on a stroke unit, mental health de-addiction unit, geriatric, and dementia wards and was eventually promoted to overseeing two dementia wards as a Deputy Charge Nurse.

During his last year in Malta, he saw the opportunity to work in the UK, so he applied through a nursing agency and was interviewed by Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust (SCFT). Ananthu was successful in gaining a nursing position with Sussex Community Trust and came to England in October 2021.

As with all internationally recruited nurses Ananthu had to go through the process of OSCE training before he could be registered on the NMC register (Ananthu had already gone through an adaptation process in Malta to be registered with the Maltese Nursing Council).

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This process took approximately two months with the support of the international recruitment Team, SCFT. Once Ananthu was named on the NMC register he started working in the Community rehabilitation unit but after a short while he applied to become a practice development nurse working with the international recruitment team. Having gone through this process himself, Ananthu had the ‘lived experience’ so was able to share his experience and guide internationally educated nurses through the transition of living in the UK from a professional perspective. Ananthu was able to provide valuable professional career advice.

One of the key cultural shocks that Ananthu was confronted with was the limitation of practicing his nursing skills gained from his previous experience before coming to the UK. This was a positive challenge as previously in his home country he had been able to carry out much clinical work without additional training and competence supervision. In the UK, Ananthu realised that he was required to have specific



Above: Ananthu Ashok, being awarded the International Community Nurse of the Year 2022 by Dame Elizabeth Anionwu OM DBE FRCN at the QNI’s Award Ceremony

training in many areas, for example, IV therapy, Urinary Catheterisation, IV canulation to name a few. He would not be able to perform these tasks without being signed off by a supervisor. Initially, this was difficult for him to understand, but when he asked himself two questions: 'Why do I have to do this?' and 'What is the purpose of doing this additional training/practice?' he soon realised that this was to uphold patient safety, which is enabling a nurse to practice safely and acknowledged that this was excellent practice. This is something that he is sharing with new internationally educated nurse recruits, so they understand the rationale for this from the onset. The additional challenge for Ananthu was the weather. He realised that it would not be as warm as India or Malta but had not been prepared for the extremes in weather that the UK experiences.

Reflecting on his positive experiences, Ananthu felt welcomed from the time he landed at Heathrow Airport in October 2021 where he was met by a taxi driver holding his name up at the airport organised by the SCFT International Recruitment team (IR). From there he was taken to his two-bedroom apartment in Crawley which was shared with another internationally recruited nurse. He was greeted by the practice development nurse and the manager of IR SCFT. They provided him with all the information he needed regarding his OSCE training, Covid-19 protocols, and policies as per the trust. His OSCE training followed 2 days later. He was given a welcome pack which included essentials for the first few weeks while he was settling in. Once the OSCE commenced a WhatsApp group was set up and this provided additional support for all the internationally recruited nurses. Throughout the period of OSCE training the international team continued to support him

and the pastoral support was invaluable.

During this period Ananthu worked in community rehabilitation wards where he was involved in multidisciplinary team meetings discussing patient prognosis, community referrals, plans for a home assessment, patient education regarding rehabilitation and family meetings regarding patient prognosis and discharge plans either to their own home or to a home care setting. This gave Ananthu a very good overview of community nursing and the importance of accurate discharge planning for patients returning to their homes. Ananthu applied for the position of a Practice Development Nurse which was initially a secondment, but now is a substantive Band 6 post within the IR team SCFT to support newly recruited Internationally educated Nurses with OSCE training, transition programme prior to starting their clinical postings and support with any additional training they may require. Ananthu thoroughly enjoys this role where he can work with internationally educated nurses. He is currently developing and designing a cultural competence document which includes communication across the international nurse workforce, highlighting the diversity of cultures and the importance of communicating and understanding various cultures. Currently, he is working and supporting internationally educated nurses from Kenya, India, Philippines, Ghana, Nepal, and Nigeria.

Ananthu's team received the Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust's Best outstanding team of the Year award 2022 and Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust has been awarded the NHS Pastoral Care Quality Award. Ananthu also won the QNI International Community Nurse of the Year Award in 2022.

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