

# Interview with: Lynne Tones

Lynne Tones explains the challenges and rewards of working as a district nurse.

## Have you always wanted to be a nurse?

Definitely - I followed my childhood dream. I have a photo of myself, aged three, dressed in a nurses outfit! Before becoming a community nurse I worked on the wards for ten years. I wanted to learn as much as I could and worked on lots of different wards. It's come in really handy in my role now as it's important you have a wealth of knowledge in different areas. Becoming a community nurse was the best thing I did. The role's so varied and helps me push myself to learn new things.

## What does your role involve?

District nurses help to improve people's health by providing high quality nursing care, based on individual needs, in community settings. On our shifts we cover wide geographic areas. We visit people in their own homes and provide a variety of services including: wound management, giving people injections, supporting people and their families during end of life care, supporting and advising on health care and providing advice and information on a range of health issues. One element of our role is to assess people who have had a fall to investigate why the fall happened.



We may need to refer the patient to a physiotherapist or doctor for further

treatment following our assessment. We aim to offer as much care in the community as possible and reduce unnecessary hospital admissions.

## Are there any other areas in your role?

As well as providing direct care, we have a teaching role. We work closely with patients to enable them to care for themselves where possible. We help to teach family members how to care for their loved ones. Alongside my nursing role I'm also a clinical practice teacher. I help to develop the skills and knowledge of my team to deliver quality care. I also shadow trainee nurses on visits and support them to deliver care whilst training. I teach qualified nurses to become district nurse team leaders too. As part of my team leader role I develop the rotas, complete risk assessments, undertake appraisals and support my team on a daily basis. It's a complex role with lots of multi-tasking needed!

“ *It's all about working together to meet people's needs.* ”

## You must be busy! What challenges do you face as a district nurse?

The role's really demanding and requires organisation and flexibility. The diversity of the job is always a challenge. No two days are the same, and no patient is the same. We have to be flexible and call on the support of partner organisations when needed. In Winter,



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when ice and snow mean that transport becomes a challenge, to ensure everyone gets the care they need, we re-organise our case loads so we can visit people nearest to our homes. You have to prioritise and be sassy.

**Teamwork is obviously important. Do you work with other types of nurses?**

Oh, yes. We frequently work closely with a variety of different agencies and professional groups to make sure patients receive the care they need. For example we can make referrals to social services to support people with their personal care needs. We often make referrals to physiotherapists and other specialists, who can support patients with specialist care and treatment such as people with asthma and chronic diseases. We also receive referrals from GPs and hospitals to support people. It’s all about working together to meet people’s needs.

**How can people access a district nurse?**

Referrals can be made into our service by other health and social care professionals as

well as self-referral by patients and carers.

**What do you enjoy most about your job?**

I love my job. The support given to me by my team, and the support I give them, has meant that I have gained a lot of friends. My manager is also an excellent source of support. I enjoy meeting new people, and being able to give them a voice just by listening to them. Knowing I have made a difference is incredibly rewarding.

We hope the article has given you a flavour into some of the roles of a District Nurse. For further information visit: <http://www.bdct.nhs.uk/our-community-health-services/adult-services/district-nurses/>



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