



Bekki Whisker

Matron for York Forensic Services

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What is your job title, what does it involve day-to-day and how long have you been working in that role and/or at the Trust?

I'm the matron for York Forensic Services. I trained in York and qualified in 1999 just after my 21st birthday. I worked in York mental health services until 2012 and started this role in 2016. I lead the nursing workforce and oversee the operational function of the wards here at Clifton House.

Why did you choose to work for the NHS?

I've always wanted to work within the caring profession, initially I thought I wanted to be a social worker but then felt that a role in healthcare would provide me with more diversity. I did two years of general nurse training and then realised that I was much more interested in the emotional support for patients. My mum cried the day I handed in my general nursing uniform!

I'm incredibly proud to be a part of the NHS. I've had some wonderful opportunities and within my social circle, I don't know anyone who has enjoyed their job as much as I have over the years.

What's your favourite part about the job?

Making sure quality care is delivered to patients and supporting others to overcome the challenges. I love translating a strategic vision into practice and watching a service develop.

What's the most challenging part about your job?

Without a doubt, it's managing the pace of change for the workforce and also for our service users. I've seen a lot of changes in the NHS over the last 20 years, a lot of it for the better but some is certainly linked to reduced funds and these changes can be very hard to support.

Tell us about:**a time you were really proud of your work**

I'm proud of the workforce I lead and I'm proud of their resilience and positivity about the future. In the past, I was very proud to be invited to speak at an international conference and also when I won an award for Innovative Practice from the Ministry of Justice.

your fondest memory of working at the Trust

It's really difficult to pick out one moment but celebrating with Bluebell Ward when they won the Clinical Team of the Year Award at the Trust Awards was certainly a good evening!

I'd also say seeing several staff members develop and gain promotion into leadership positions has been very rewarding.

What do our values of integrity, simplicity and caring mean to you? How do you show these values in the work that you do?

I've spent a good deal of my career working as a satellite from mainstream NHS services, working in prisons and councils. I've always been frustrated by the use of over complicated language and terminology, so I make a concerted effort to ensure that the language I use is understood by the audience.

Like many of us, I have first-hand experience of the NHS as a patient and as a carer. My father spent seven years as an inpatient in York Mental Health Services before he died eight years ago - sadly he had early onset Alzheimer's Disease. I know what good care feels like as a carer and I truly understand the impact when things don't go well. Some of the nurses who looked after dad work in my service and I know he was well looked after when I watch them at work today. I have no doubt that I lead an extremely compassionate and caring team here at Clifton House, we keep our service users at the centre of all we do and believe that service user involvement is key to good quality care, delivery and service development.

What message would you give to inspire the future NHS workforce in your area of work or in general?

The NHS has provided me with a lot of opportunity and experience in diverse roles and interesting work settings. I know the NHS will continue to offer the very best of care and opportunity despite these difficult times.

How has the NHS made a difference to you/how have you seen the NHS help people?

The NHS has shaped me as a professional and leader and I'm thankful for the development opportunities it has provided me with. I've seen it support service users recover in challenging circumstances, reaching out to people who may seem unreachable.