

MC Nurse Consultant

Michelle Curtis

Nursing



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

75

I was recently appointed as the first nurse consultant within the Surgical Directorate in North Wales. On reflection this seems a long way from my father telling me I wouldn't last a week in nursing when I started as a student nurse in 1984!

I really enjoyed my training. After qualifying I worked in a relief post covering most of the hospital. At the time I found the lack of continuity off-putting, but it provided me with a vast amount of knowledge, skills and experience which proved invaluable. It was at this time that I finished a degree in English literature too.



I went on to work nights on the Surgical Unit whilst juggling small children and ongoing studying. I built up my clinical and judgement skills. And I then completed a BSc in Critical Care and undertook extended clinical roles and skills whilst gathering valuable nursing experience.

As my children grew older, I worked on the Surgical Admission ward and following this, I became a senior sister on a busy 32 -bed Upper Gastrointestinal (UGI) and General Surgical ward. It was the acute presentation and complexity of these patients that I found most rewarding. The role allowed me to set high standards for patients by listening, reviewing research, extensive training and improving pathways that would ultimately reflect positively on the patient experience. Positive patient outcomes increased on the ward very quickly and that gave me the motivation to continue.

I joined the UGI Unit in 2007 as a nurse practitioner, developing the role to an advanced nurse practitioner, following completion of the MSc in Advanced Clinical Practice. Developing the North Wales UGI pathways underpinned with current research, involved engaging with clinicians and allied health professions across the three sites along with highlighting the voice of our patients.

The challenge was to ensure that these improvements were workable in practice and therefore meant that the involvement of those working around me was essential. Extending my clinical skills further involved developing the role of first assistant in theatre, clinical examination, prescribing and setting up elective and emergency independent clinics. My



GIG
CYMRU
NHS
WALES

Addysg a Gwella Iechyd
Cymru (AaGIC)
Health Education and
Improvement Wales (HEIW)

role continued to develop along with the service and patient requirements into the current role of nurse consultant in Upper GI surgery.

Looking back, I have enjoyed my career, with its many challenges, as well as its many achievements for celebration and working within an excellent team. In Betsi Cadwaladr, this role is new and I hope this will inspire and motivate others to follow suit, to help shape the future of nursing and patient care in Wales. The way forward is exciting.