

## Real-life story - Nisha Shah

Nisha trained as a general nurse and decided she wanted to help empower young people to make positive choices about their health and well being, so she decided to pursue a career in school nursing.



Nisha Shah Specialist community public health nurse  
**Employer or university** Gloucestershire Care Services  
**Salary range** Unknown

### How I got into the role

After completing a degree in nursing, I worked as a school nurse for ten years. I was keen to take my knowledge and skills to the next level so I enrolled at the University of West England to start my specialist community public health nursing (SCPHN) training. I received my post graduate diploma in 2009.

The SCPHN training was fantastic and equipped me with the knowledge and skills I needed to support children and young people within a school setting, as well as families and communities. The training also taught me to challenge existing practice and 'think outside the box' when working with children, young people and their families. I had a lot of support and encouragement from my practice teachers and this inspired me to complete the practice teacher course in 2010.

I am currently the senior nurse in a team of school nurses, covering the entire Cheltenham locality.

## What I do

As an SCPHN, my responsibilities are varied and include supporting other staff with complex cases, liaising with schools, supporting school staff with managing medical needs, drop-in services for secondary schools and parents and carers of primary aged children, immunisation sessions, mentoring students, supporting and recruiting new staff, and much more.

The practice teacher element of my role allows me to nurture and guide future school nurses and I always aim to be a positive role model for the future school nurse workforce. Being a practice teacher also allows me to be at the forefront when it comes to shaping the service, based on local and national needs.

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## The best bits and challenges

The part I love most about my job is that no two days are ever the same! I am very lucky to be supported by a newly qualified SCPHN, who was my student last year, and a number of other healthcare staff including support nurses, school nurse assistants and screeners.

I am passionate about the difference that school nursing can make, particularly in assisting young people to make empowered positive choices about their health and well being. And knowing that what I do will, in turn impact on future generations and reduce health inequalities is very rewarding.

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