

# "I am passionate about the difference that school nursing can make."

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



### How I got into the role

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My career in school nursing started in 1997 when I moved to a new part of the UK. I was a registered general and children's nurse but had worked primarily in paediatrics.

In 2008, I was offered the chance to study for a Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) Masters Module. It was a year's training at the University of West England.

The training was intense but equipped me with additional skills to support children, young people and their families. I gained the knowledge and skills to help them live healthier lives, physically and emotionally. Skills to 'think outside the box' also helped me find creative solutions. I felt confident to challenge existing practice and change services for

the better.

I have since become a 'practice assessor' which means I can support current SCPHN school nursing students. I also shape the education and training of current student nurses through placements and giving them an insight into public health.

## **What I do**

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School nurses are often the first point of contact. I identify any health needs, and consider what support is needed. It is then discussed with the young person and their family. We implement a plan with the expectation that it will reduce the risk of any situation getting worse.

Safeguarding is at the core of everything I do. It means that a large part of the role is supporting young people who may have experienced or are at risk of harm.

Prevention is paramount and early help is also vital. Empowering young people and their families has a real impact on their health and development. I can help them understand their own health needs and where to seek the right support at the right time. This gives them the skills that they can use in young adulthood and beyond.

## **The best bits and challenges**

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It's a real privilege to see young people getting the support they need whether that's in school, at home or in the community.

I love being able to work with multidisciplinary teams and agencies. We are one big team with a young person's health at its core.

I just wish there was more time. There is never enough!

## **Future career plans**

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I have loved being part of service development. I also really enjoy being a team leader and the lead for projects in education, training and sexual health.

I would love to work on more projects like this in the future.

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### Links

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/we-are-the-nhs/registration?career=nursing-guide>