Neonatal nurse

Neonatal [1] nurses care for newborn babies who are born premature or sick. A newborn baby can suffer from a range conditions requiring treatment.

Working life

Premature babies have specific problems such as respiratory [2] difficulties or nutritional needs that can be life threatening. You'll be a crucial part of the team that ensures that treatment is given promptly and appropriately by a team.

Get started

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You'll provide 24 hour care in acute hospitals. You'll work shifts in intensive care [4], high dependency and special care baby units. Some nurses work in the community, providing continuing care and support for

babies and their families who have been recently discharged from hospital.

You'll also have an important role in supporting the parents of the baby at a time when they themselves are very anxious and stressed.

You'll have a range of tasks that will include:

- preparing and checking medications
- managing a baby's fluids
- recording observations and documenting a baby's care
- initiating appropriate basic resuscitation in an emergency situation.

You'll work with a range of professionals such as paediatricians, dietitians, midwives and other children's nurses.You'll also have an important role in supporting the parents of the baby at a time when they themselves are very anxious and stressed.

Entry requirements and training to be a neonatal [1] nurse

You need to be a registered adult nurse [5], child nurse [6] or midwife [7] to apply for a job as a neonatal [1] nurse. Some employers may ask for experience or knowledge of neonatal [1] nursing issues eg. handling bereavements or related areas, for example breast feeding. After a period of six months of relevant experience, you'll be encouraged to undertake professional development. This will usually involve specific training modules on different aspects of neonatal [1] nursing. These are delivered in partnership by your employer and local universities. They might be online, offering the opportunity for distance learning.

Must have skills

You might be responsible for babies with a range of health needs so being highly organised, flexible and able to prioritise effectively will be vital. You'll also be highly observant, able to assess patients and take responsibility for determining the best course of action. You'll also need empathy and understanding for the families of the babies you are working with. You'll also need a good understanding of the physiological and psychological needs of the new-born and be able to work effectively within a multidisciplinary team.

Career develoment

You could move into management, research or advanced practice. There are also opportunities to work as a nurse consultant. Or you could work in education, training student nurses or supporting current nurses with their continuous development.

Pay and conditions

Your standard working week will be around 37.5 hours on shift pattern which can include nights, early starts, evenings, weekends and bank holidays. As a neonatal [1] nurse, you'll be paid on the Agenda for Change (AFC) pay system [8], typically starting at band 5.

You'll also have access to our generous pension scheme and health service discounts, as well as at least 27 days of annual leave plus bank holidays.

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