

"My goal is always to make the patients happy and, if I'm lucky, receive a smile and "thank you" from them."

Jurinda has held various pharmacy roles throughout her career, including working in a high street pharmacy, in manufacturing and in a hospital.

Real-life story - Jurinda Cowe

Senior pharmacy technician

Employer or university

City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust
Jurinda Cowe

How I got into the role

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As young as age 11, I was very keen to learn about medicinal herbs and was very interested in biology. My aunt used to laugh and say, "One day you'll work in pharmacy yourself!"

I didn't get into university unfortunately but worked as a cashier in a local pharmacy where I observed the pharmacy technicians serving customers and advising on different medications. It was at that point I decided to study pharmacy myself and took a two-year pharmacy technician course (equivalent to the two-year NVQ3/BTec course).

When I moved to England in 1999, I found a job in a local pharmacy here and served customers, dispensed prescriptions and rotated stock.

After a few years more experience, I was confident enough to apply to work for a pharmaceuticals manufacturer and worked in their lab. It was invaluable experience.

What I do

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My manufacturing job was a long way from home so eventually I applied for a pharmacy position at my local hospital. I had never worked in a hospital before and it was a bit scary at the beginning!

I was initially based in the pharmacy dispensary where I completed my checking course and started training on the wards as a medicine management technician. In that role it was important that I was very organised, able to work on my own as well as part of a group, and a good communicator.

My days at work are very busy and full of unexpected tasks. One moment I may be counselling a patient about their medication, and the next, as a manager, I may have to deal with upset or angry patients or a medication error or query.

Pharmacy is an exciting and varied profession to work in. I've already had many opportunities to change my career path, and am so glad I chose pharmacy.

The best bits and challenges

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My goal is always to make the patients happy and, if I'm lucky, receive a smile and "thank you" from them.

My role at the hospital has taught me how to look after my team. I'm very proud to be working here and the opportunities I have to get involved in many aspects of pharmacy work.

Life outside work

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For over 10 years now, one of my hobbies has been public service interpreting and I hold a Diploma in Public Service Interpreting in law. I've dealt with many varied cases and have visited police stations, courts, prisons and immigration detention centres as an official interpreter on behalf of the Government. It's another area of my life where accuracy is vital.

I have an eye for detail and love photography. Most of the time my 'models' are my large breed Bernese mountain dogs and my German shepherd.

I've also recently taken up scuba diving and enjoy diving all around the world. Again, attention to detail is absolutely essential.

Career plans and top tips for others

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I'm currently studying to complete my Medicine Management level 3 course and am sure I'll find another course to study after that!

If you're interested in a career in pharmacy, you need to be methodical, empathetic and diligent.

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