

**"Sometimes, all the patient wants is a cup of tea and a chat. Other times, they may need to talk to me about something that has been causing them emotional pain."**

Martyn was one of the first trainee nursing associates in the country and loved both the study and NHS placements. Read on to find out why!

## **Martyn Davey**

### **Nursing associate**

#### **Employer or university**

Somerset Partnership NHS Foundation Trust

#### **Salary range**

£15k-£25k



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**How I got into  
the role**

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collapse**

At 18, I left my supermarket job to seek a new challenge. I joined a care agency where I looked after people in their own homes, which included caring for the elderly and people with learning disabilities and mental ill health. Eventually, I joined the NHS as a support worker, looking after young children with breathing difficulties. Care was provided in their own homes, sometimes with one-to-one support at night.

After seven years of working nights and juggling my personal life, I managed to complete my NVQ Level 3. I wanted another challenge in a patient-focused career, but full time university wasn't a viable option for me.

I applied to work at Wessex House, a child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS) inpatient unit, and loved every minute! I then got a place on the training course to be a nursing associate which had a mix of university study and NHS placements.

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## **What I do**

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A typical day consists of supporting young patients to get up and attend education in the mornings. This is part of their therapeutic timetable to help them recover without affecting him or her academically.

In the afternoon, I work closely with occupational therapists to support group work on mental health topics such as coping with anxiety and depression. In the evenings, I provide one-to-one support for patients who may ask for or require assistance if they are in a distressed state.

Once I'm in a permanent nursing associate role, I will be in charge of the medication round on the ward, and be able to assess and write risk assessments for patients in my care. I will also be a shift co-ordinator so I can delegate jobs to other support workers and healthcare assistants.

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## **The best bits and challenges**

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The best bit about my job - and sometimes the upsetting part too - is the one-to-one contact I have with my patients. I support them with day-to-day things like shopping, cooking and even baking.

Sometimes, all the patient wants is a cup of tea and a chat; other times, they may need to talk to me about something that has been causing them a lot of emotional pain.

Our patients can resort to self-harming behaviour which can be very challenging. But the team I work with is amazing and we support each other.

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## **Life outside work**

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I'm a massive Batman and Harry Potter fan so I love reading or watching anything to do with these two characters. I also like watching Netflix and enjoy spending time with my family and my little boy too.

I created a national trainee nursing associate (TNA) peer and support group on Facebook which a few of us look after between us. This helped with the course as we were able to talk and share issues and get relevant information out to all TNAs across the UK. This is something I am proud of and I hope I can provide the same type of support to future trainees.

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## **Career plans and top tips for others**

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## collapse

The university part of the nursing associate training allowed me to take on more responsibilities and will provide me with career progression – something I never thought I'd achieve! I'm the first in my family to go to university and I'm proud that I will be able to show my son you're never too old to achieve what you want to do.

I have not gone back to school in 14 years so sometimes the course was tough. But it's like riding a bike; you soon get the hang of it again.

Having work experience before starting the course gave me a good academic and professional understanding and, by the end of the first year, I started seeing things through the eyes of a future nursing associate. I have a better understanding now of the processes of how we treat our patients and the importance of a [holistic](#) <sup>[1]</sup> approach.

When we started the course, we were asked, "What would you like to do once you qualify?" Many said they'd like to be nurses, but I said my plan is to become the director of nursing before I retire!

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[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Holistic> [2] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/we-are-the-nhs/registration?career=nursing-guide>