

"I absolutely love carrying out patient care, helping and supporting women and their families with their new born babies."

During her time as a nurse cadet, Katie loved her placement on an antenatal and postnatal ward so much, she applied for a permanent position there and was successful!

Katie Battersby

Maternity support worker

Employer or university

United Lincolnshire Hospitals NHS Trust

Salary range

£15k-£25k

Katie Battersby with newborn baby

How I got into the role

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I have always been interested in pregnancy, birth and babies, and looked into midwifery training but I didn't fancy staying at school to do my A-levels. I heard about the cadet nurse scheme and thought that sounded like a good way to get a taste of working in different areas within the hospital whilst gaining qualifications.

I applied to be a cadet nurse and, amongst the 200 applicants, I managed to get one of the ten places available. I gained a level 2 in NVQ health and social care and thoroughly enjoyed my time getting involved in different types of patient care.

It was during this time that I had a placement at Nettleham ward – an antenatal and postnatal ward in Lincoln County hospital. I loved it there so much that, before I was due

to finish the cadet nurse scheme, with the encouragement of the staff in the ward, I applied for the healthcare support worker role. The week I completed the cadet nurse scheme, I found out I was successful and was offered the role. It's been almost nine years and I am still working full-time on Nettleham ward.

What I do

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A typical day starts at 7am with listening to the handover from the night staff – establishing if anyone needs extra help or support, etc. Then we go around and change all the water jugs, get the beds made up/changed, assist with giving lunch and supper meals to patients and cleaning a bed space when someone is discharged. In between our set tasks, we assist the midwives with venepuncture, cannulation, blood glucose observations, support with breastfeeding and any other tasks they need help with.

I received training in mental health awareness and wellbeing, where I also gained qualifications at level 2. I have also completed my level 3 apprenticeship in clinical healthcare as well as attended in house training courses for venepuncture, cannulation, blood glucose observation and supporting with breastfeeding. I am so proud of being able to fulfil this role by using what I have learnt – supporting women and their families and at the same time helping the midwives by taking some pressure off their workload.

The best bits and challenges

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I absolutely love carrying out patient care, helping and supporting women and their families with their newborn babies, and also helping midwives and managers. Just generally being able to help, chatting to people and learning new things is what I enjoy.

Often people think our job is all cleaning and that we don't do anything else. But I can always find something to do on the ward. Like a lot of things, you get back what you put in.

As lovely as it is working in maternity, it isn't all cuddling lovely babies and looking after them. We work hard in a busy, fast-paced environment and have lots of cleaning and general care tasks to undertake.

Life outside work

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I live on a farm where we have 400 breeding ewes which we lamb in January/February and 14 suckler cows! I am also a member of a Young Farmers' Club where I have learnt many skills such as public speaking and debating.

Being able to escape from the hustle and bustle of a busy hospital ward to a farm is a brilliant stress reliever. No matter how challenging the animals can be, at least they don't answer back!

Career plans and top tips for others

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In our trust a new role, a band 3 maternity support worker, has just become available. I applied for it and got an interview, so I am keeping everything crossed that I do well.

You need to be a strong-willed, driven person who is friendly and able to work well as part of the team where everyone is equal.

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