

“Each day presents me with the chance to make a meaningful difference, such as offering a kind word.”

Driven by her compassion to help vulnerable people, Ruth’s journey took her from having no qualifications to a nursing associate apprenticeship, and onto an adult nursing degree.

Ruth Thiari

Registered nursing associate

Employer or university

Twin Oaks Nursing Home



How I got into the role

Expand / collapse

I began working at a nursing home as a healthcare assistant after migrating to the UK. I had worked as a house help and domestic worker in Kenya but there were very few education opportunities.

My volunteer work in a children’s home instilled a profound compassion and empathy for others, inspiring me to want to work with vulnerable people.

During my time at the nursing home, my manager told me about the nursing associate apprenticeship. I didn’t have the necessary level 2 maths qualification, but I achieved this through my local council and began the apprenticeship.

The apprenticeship placements were great learning opportunities. I experienced different clinical settings and worked with a range of patients. It helped me develop my skills and reinforced my commitment to nursing.

I finished my apprenticeship in 2023 with merit and became a registered nursing associate.

What I do

Expand / collapse

I help nursing home residents with daily activities such as bathing, dressing, eating and walking. Working closely with registered nurses, I also perform clinical tasks such as administering medications, taking vital signs and conducting wound care.

Most importantly, I support residents with their emotional and psychological needs. This may involve helping them with their anxieties or comforting them in their final stages of life. I also take pride in making sure their dignity is maintained and offering support and compassion to their families.

The best bits and challenges

Expand / collapse

The best thing about my job is being able to help vulnerable people. Being able to comfort, support and offer them compassionate care is incredibly fulfilling.

Each day I get the chance to make a meaningful difference, whether it's offering a kind word, helping people with their daily activities, or caring for them.

Seeing my residents' wellbeing improve is an honour and a privilege, particularly towards their end of life. I also enjoy building trusting relationships with them and working with a supportive and dedicated team. This all leads to a deeply fulfilling and rewarding career.

The biggest challenge is managing the emotional intensity. I occasionally feel helpless when I see people in pain or stress, despite my best efforts to help them.

Career plans and top tips for others

Expand / collapse

Towards the end of my student nursing associate apprenticeship, I started thinking about how I could develop my skills. I always wanted to be a nurse, and my apprenticeship gave me the confidence to pursue this. I applied for an adult nursing degree!

Being a full-time nursing student can be challenging but is always immensely rewarding. I am also grateful for the financial support I receive through the NHS Learning Support Fund. It has allowed me to focus on my studies and ease some of the financial pressures.

It's important to keep a balance so I schedule specific times for studying, attending lectures and completing assignments, as well as rest and relaxation. I am also lucky to have a strong support network of family, friends and fellow students. It makes a big difference.

My nursing associate apprenticeship really helped me understand nursing and gave me a head start as a nursing student. This journey has reinforced my belief that knowledge is power, skill is evidence and age is merely a number!

Life outside work

Expand / collapse

In my spare time, I enjoy cooking, spending time outdoors and being with loved ones. These activities help me unwind and recharge.

Source URL:<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/nursing-associate/real-life-story-ruth-thiari>