

## Real-life story - Lisa Maclean

Lisa has seen nursing change dramatically over the last 30 years. It gives her the chance to develop her interests and offers a range of benefits.



**Lisa Maclean** Senior lecturer and lead for external engagement, nursing  
**Employer or university** Open University  
**Salary range** Unknown

### How I got into the role

After my education in adult nursing, I qualified as a mental health nurse. Combining these two specialisms was a great asset for my career, giving me a fuller understanding of the relationship between physical and mental health. I was the first female charge nurse to join a unit specialising in family therapy for adolescents considered at risk of offending. I loved it. Adolescents are exciting to work with, the right care can positively impact their future.

### My career

All nursing is about promoting person-centred care. This is especially true of mental health nursing. We manage, treat and care for patients anywhere at home, in prison, in hospital...even under a bridge in some busy city.

I feel privileged to have had such an interesting, exciting career. I've dealt with situations most people only know through television dramas, and can honestly say I've never had a boring day. I've worked on national policies, educated prison officers about mental health awareness, investigated deaths in custody, and have even travelled to the Caribbean to review prison healthcare.

As a new student nurse in the early eighties, all the myths about nursing seemed true. My role was to complete tasks, follow instructions from seniors and never to get on first name terms with patients. The ward was efficient but relied on routine and process which, at times, left individual patient needs unmet.

Thirty years later, nursing is almost unrecognisable. The stereotypes are faded memories. Modern nurses work independently and are empowered to improve patient outcomes. Nursing care is tailored to each patient by carrying out and using research and other information. It's a very different job.

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## Going further

I moved into education, as a university senior lecturer in forensic psychiatry, before taking a clinical role again as the first consultant nurse for the Prison Service. Consultant nurses combine research, education, clinical practice and specialist expertise. The title shows just how much credibility and leadership nurses can have. I've also gained a Bachelors degree in Healthcare, a Masters in Women's Studies and completed my teaching qualification (PGCE).

I'm now a senior lecturer with the Open University and I still act as a resource for the Prison Service.

## Advice and tips

A nursing education gives you skills highly valued in any career such as project management, communication, insight into people and resilience. Despite my transferable skills, I'm not tempted to leave the profession. Nursing gives me the whole package. The chance to develop my interests and find something unique to offer, while the rewards just keep on growing.

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