

# "I loved being a practice nurse and working with the wide range of people who walked through my door every day!"

Nadia's role as a practice nurse varied from day to day and she used to look after patients from all over the world. She's now a consultant nurse and works with partners to reduce hospital admissions in South Essex.

## Nadia Halley

### Consultant nurse/matron and Queen's nurse

#### Employer or university

Mid and South Essex NHS Foundation Trust  
practice nurse

### How I got into the role

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My mother trained to be a nurse and encouraged me to consider it as a career. I saw her using these skills every day while I was growing up. I still remember some of the practical skills and continue to use some of them today. In the early 1990s, I volunteered, and worked for a charity in India, providing medical and nursing care for people living in the worst conditions imaginable. This experience led to me training to be a nurse when I returned to England.

After qualifying, I worked as community nurse for a few years before becoming a district nurse. Working in the community gave me the opportunity to learn and develop a wide range of transferable skills. I did take some time away from the NHS and used my skills in Malawi, working with people with HIV and vaccinating children who did not have life

saving and preventable disease vaccinations.

Upon returning to the UK, I started a part-time practice nursing apprenticeship, while continuing to work as a community nurse the rest of the week. This is when I started to specialise in managing chronic diseases and started to work full-time as a practice nurse and completed my nursing degree in nursing with a 2:1.

After working in GP practices across Essex including becoming a practice nurse manager, leading a team of nurses and health care assistants across 11 practices, I was given the chance to help implement a plan to reduce hospital admissions.

## **What I do**

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As a practice nurse, I loved what I did and I found fulfilment working with a wide range of people who walked through my door! Many of my patients were refugees fleeing war torn countries like Afghanistan, Iraq, Syria and Somalia while others were from Kazakhstan, Nepal, eastern Europe, Turkey and from several African countries.

A typical day would see me doing routine work like childhood immunisations, cytology and ear syringing, [electrocardiograms](#) [1] and wound care. I also looked after people with long term conditions and patients who self-harmed, had mental health problems or were homeless.

In my current role as a consultant nurse, I work in strategic planning and how we can reshape healthcare by bringing together primary, secondary and [tertiary care](#) [2].

## **The best bits and challenges**

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As a practice nurse I enjoyed knowing I've been able to help those from other nations and the fulfilment that comes with making a difference to someone's life and knowing it's appreciated.

As I progressed to a nurse manager, it was fulfilling to help other nurses and healthcare professionals reach their potential through encouragement, training, and development while continuing to develop myself. The NHS strongly believes in developing its workforce and I have been very lucky to have experienced this firsthand, including

recently being given the chance to do a Master's degree.

As a consultant nurse, I bring together NHS, social care and the voluntary sector to make difference to patient care. Bringing like-minded people together to achieve this has been incredibly rewarding, and we are already seeing a reduction in hospital admissions while patients continue to receive excellent care.

There are always challenges. Political and financial instability can affect the sustainability of services. The pandemic was a particularly dark time. I worked on the front line and there were many exhausting days, especially when vaccination programme began. But I was proud to have been the lead nurse at two vaccination centres in Thurrock which I helped set up.

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**Source URL:**<https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/explore-roles/nursing/roles-nursing/general-practice-nurse/real-life-story-nadia-halley>

#### **Links**

[1] <https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Electrocardiograms> [2]  
[https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Tertiary\\_care](https://www.healthcareers.nhs.uk/glossary#Tertiary_care)