

Transition from student to registered professional

I started working as a registered nurse in October 2021 and I was both excited and nervous about taking the big step and having responsibilities of my own. I was no longer accountable to my Practice Supervisor or Assessor, now patients and their relatives look to me for the answers to their questions. Transition for me has not been an easy road but I am getting there slowly but surely. I am going through a phase due to bereavement, that impacted my confidence and my mental health, but being part of a team and juggling competing demands is helping me to a certain extent.

Impact, learning and support

My student placements were a massive help for me as a newly qualified nurse (NQN), especially the management one where I had to look after a number of patients on my own with my Practice Supervisor and Practice Assessor available for support and to assist in any tasks I was not trained to do, not so sure of or not confident in carrying out. In addition, following a patient's journey from admission until discharge has helped my transition from student to a NQN because I knew what to expect. This included what assessments to carry out, referrals required, management planning, updating all involved in the care as well as relatives, discharge planning and follow up appointments in any were required.

As a NQN I have received my NHSGGC NQP signifier badge and I wear it with pride.. Some staff don't know what it signifies, so I am happy to explain to them. I have felt the benefits of wearing it, highlighting that I am newly qualified and still learning, and I can explain to people to bear with me.

Due to the pandemic there are reduced staffing levels within the unit which impacted on my time as a supernumerary member of the team. I would have preferred a longer spell however, the staff members on the ward have been happy to help whenever I need support with patient care. Recently, my Practice Education Facilitator (PEF) visited me to explain Flying Start and how it could contribute to my other educational needs such as revalidation and CPD.

When I began on the ward my line manager wasn't available and I wasn't really sure who to ask about induction. I thought that it was face-to-face but due to the pandemic I discovered that it was all online. There was also an IT issue with my email account which delayed access to my emails and because I only work a couple of shifts each week it took a while to sort out. This also delayed the allocation of a facilitator to support me through the Flying Start programme and some staff are unsure what Flying Start involves and it would have been helpful to me if they had they been more aware. However, my PEF was able to support me with this and provided information to my facilitator about her role which we can share with our colleagues.

Reflecting back over the last few months, and an experience that had an impact on me — my learning and confidence — it was my very first nightshift and a patient was transferred from another hospital to my unit. On arrival to the ward she was pyrexial so I gave her some paracetamol to try and improve her condition, but despite this she became warmer until her temperature reached 39.4 degrees, indicating she had an infection. I was keen to manage her care on my own with some support from my colleague who was on duty with me. He talked me through the process of what to do which gave me the confidence to act appropriately. I paged the doctor, informed the hospital co-ordinator of the patient's condition and commenced some intravenous fluids. With the appropriate care and treatment my patient became stable. Initially I was panicking because the woman was unwell and I was responsible for her care but then I felt great because I was able to do something and I didn't realise how much I knew until I was faced with this situation. In future, I would be calmer because of this experience. It has had a positive impact on my confidence.

Flying Start NHS programme

I didn't initially feel I had a good understanding of the Flying Start requirements, so I visited the Flying Start Portal which helped to make things clearer. I watched the video presentations and was able to register for the programme by following the instructions within booklet one. I also booked onto a Flying Start support session. I have been accessing the NHSGGC Flying Start Portal and think this will help me as a NQN to transition into a confident qualified nurse. I have also started to use some of the resources in booklet 2 to evidence learning within my e-portfolio. So far, I have used reflections, development steps and zones of discomfort. I was made aware of the portal when I attended the NHSGGC recruitment day where various sectors were giving a talk and the Practice Education team talked about Flying Start as well as giving us email addresses to send details to if we were interested in sharing our experiences. I also had seen other newly qualified nurses using it when I was on placement as a student.

I have now been relating my learning and development to the Flying Start learning outcomes. I have had experiences which I feel it will be useful for reflective purposes. I have just started going through the Clinical Practice learning outcomes which I am sure I will find very useful and rewarding. I know I will have things like IV training to do and now that I have been allocated a facilitator I can meet and discuss with her when this will be possible and how I can use it towards my learning outcomes. I have completed TURAS training, sent my certificate away and am waiting on the BM Badge to be delivered. I have also done the HEPMA training and I have been able to help more experienced members of staff who are unsure of some of its functions. I have not had any other training so far however, I know that my facilitator and PEF will be able to support me with how the learning fits with my learning outcomes if I'm unsure. I have also started building my Flying Start portfolio of evidence using e-portfolio with some reflective accounts, self development steps and zones of discomfort completed templates.

Over the next few months, I'm looking forward to gaining confidence and experience in handling my caseload. Being given opportunities to attend any training available to make me a confident and well equipped registered nurse who will be able to help students, colleagues and other NQNs in future.