



Fiona O'Neill

Clinical Sister
Band 6

What does your job entail?

I work in the Day Surgery Unit in Antrim Area Hospital as a Clinical Sister which also covers Whiteabbey Day Surgery Unit. My job involves overseeing the day to day running of the Day Surgery Unit. Which includes theatre and recovery ensuring that patients receive high quality of care from admission to discharge. I support staff in their day to roles i.e., training and competencies ensuring that they feel safe in their place of work and create a safe working environment. Conducting audits and maintaining high standards of practice and managing issues that may affect the day to day running of lists is also part of my role.

How did you get into this line of work?

I worked hard at secondary school and during my A-levels to get the grades required for university and then applied to University of Ulster, Coleraine for nursing. I wanted to be a nurse because I wanted to be able to make people feel/get better. During my time studying and training to become a nurse I worked as an agency nursing auxiliary.

Outline your career to date

I qualified in 2010 and worked in England for one year as there were no jobs in hospital nursing at home. I returned home to a Band 5 post in Causeway Theatres and worked there for four years. I then wanted to progress my career and moved to a Band 5 theatre nurse post in trauma and orthopaedics in RVH and worked there for three and a half years. I moved to the Regional Major Trauma Ward in Belfast and worked there for a year and a half, applied for promotion as a Band 6 clinical sister post in day surgery in Antrim and was thankfully successful.

Tell us about your qualifications and training

I have nine GCSE's three A-levels and my degree from nursing. I previously completed a trauma and orthopaedic course and completed a module for the management of the critically ill patient. I also previously undertook advanced life support and intermediate life support, during the COVID pandemic and my redeployment to Intensive Care Unit (ICU), I found the up-skilling training extremely beneficial. I am currently doing my anaesthetic specialist practise course.

What qualities are required for your job – personal and professional?

I feel that I am an approachable person who is open and honest and able to admit when I am wrong. I enjoy being a team player and having worked with a different member of the multi-disciplinary team. At times you need to be patient, understanding and have the ability to care and treat people equally at all times.

What is the best advice you have ever received?

Don't let your fear/self-doubt get in the way of you achieving your goals.

Tell us an interesting fact about yourself

When I was in orthopaedics, I was the scrub nurse for a procedure that was televised through the BBC, which documented different patients through different operations and the cameras were in the theatre whilst we were undergoing surgery.

Who has inspired you most in your life?

My mummy has provided me with sound advice, both personally and professionally. She has made sacrifices in order for me and my siblings to develop and grow. She always provided a safe home environment which some people don't have the luxury of.

What advice would you give your 16-year-old self?

Don't panic, do more travelling, be more adventurous. In life you will have knockbacks as things don't always plan out the way you think they should – remember there will be a better opportunity waiting for you round the corner.