

'I enjoy the variety of my work'

Karen Suarez, 47, is a dental practice manager, extended duties nurse OHE, an assessor for the BDA, an examiner for NEBDN, a Specialist Advisor for the CQC, and an Accredited School Governor. She is married with two daughters and lives in London.

I get up at 6:30 am and drive or sometimes take the train to work, which is 16 miles away. For breakfast I have coffee and occasionally porridge in the cafe near work with a breakfast club.

Monday to Thursday I work 9 to 5 as a practice manager; Fridays are for my other jobs - assessing and inspecting - and some evenings I do school governing.

I enjoy the variety of my work and the ability to share good practice in my managerial role. I also enjoy the interaction with my colleagues and the public. Time management can be challenging: fitting in all my different roles as well as quality time with my family.

In my dental team there are three dentists, two dental nurses, two trainee nurses, one administrator and me. We are situated in Islington, a very cosmopolitan area, and have a real mixture of social and ethnic groups among our patients.

Every year we have practice outreach programmes at nurseries, schools and older people's homes and we also hold special in-practice events. We are a BDA Good Practice scheme member which has encouraged these sorts of events; as a team we all enjoy participating. They are great for team morale as well as being a fantastic practice building exercise.

I have had the same employer for 26 years now. He has always encouraged, mentored and inspired me throughout my career.

I usually get home at 6:30 pm. In my free time I enjoy salsa and Judo (not at the same time!) and of course spending time with my family. I am bracing myself this year as my eldest daughter will be starting her GCSEs!

I am the family nag when it comes to oral health, although I do not always practise what I preach ... I aim to be more successful at dieting this year!

I am usually in bed by 11ish.

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