



A day in
the life
of dental
nurse

Michelle Woolridge, 36.



I get up at 6:30 am. I live with my husband and our three-year-old daughter in Durham City. I'm naughty and don't eat breakfast.

I am a dental nurse at Queensway Orthodontics in Billingham, which is about 20 miles away from home. I drive to work which takes about half an hour. I love my Volvo S40; I've had four now in 20 years of driving and sadly almost the same colour each time - so people think my car is about 20 years old, though it looks brand new.

I work Monday, Tuesday and Thursday from 8:45 am to 5:45 pm with one hour for lunch if I'm lucky. I like to arrive at work early, 8:15-8:30, to allow for being stuck in traffic.

I work within the orthodontic facility of our dental clinic; I have my own appointment book, room and dental chair. I treat patients under the prescription or direct supervision of a specialist orthodontist to take dental photographs, impressions, scans and X-rays.

I deliver oral health education to patients, patient information and instructions. I am also required on occasions to work at the chairside of either the orthodontist or orthodontic therapists.

Queensway dental clinic has over 100 employees; we provide the highest standard of dental care in a professional, relaxed and understanding environment. With oral health at the top of our agenda, dental care available ranges from essential preventive dentistry through to complex care including dental implants, orthodontics, oral surgery, the treatment of gum disease, root canal treatment and complex reconstructive dentistry. This takes place all under one roof at the Billingham Clinic. We also have facilities in Jesmond, Newcastle, in Durham and in Darlington.

Michelle Woolridge is nominated as Dental Nurse of the Year at The Dental Awards 2017 which are due to take place on 12 May 2017 at the NEC Hilton Metropole Hotel in Birmingham.

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anything dental'*

In the orthodontic department where I am based we have two specialist orthodontists, three orthodontic therapists, seven qualified dental nurses, four receptionist/administrators, one patient care co-coordinator and a wider team supporting sterilisation, management, marketing, financing and clinical governance. Our department sees both NHS and private patients who are wanting or are interested in orthodontic treatment, and their families.

I first started as a trainee dental nurse in January 1997. I had my interview, got the job and started immediately at a practice that was short staffed. After only nine months I took the NEBDN examination early due to course funding problems. Immediately afterwards I completed the Basic Oral Health course due to my interest in and passion for dental nursing. A year later I was promoted to senior dental nurse and then assistant practice manager.

I have been at Queensway since 2007, first as dental nurse then as dental nurse manager. I have completed post-graduation certificates in Sedation, Oral Health, Radiography and Orthodontic Dental Nursing, and certificates

We have verifiable training delivered at work and our employers also support our learning with in-house teaching for NEBDN qualifications. I also complete CPD in my own time and book my own courses outside of work.

I take pride in keeping up to date with all documents and legislation surrounding

lab can create a 3D printed model from the scan. The technology amazes me. Most dental practices will never have seen one, yet I'm lucky enough to have it in my room and use it daily on both NHS and private orthodontic patients.

When I'm working I usually get home between 6:30 and 7 pm.



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in fluoride varnish application, impression taking and photography.

What I enjoy most about my job is the facility and the team that I work with, and talking to and helping patients. It can be a challenge to find time for a cup of tea during my working day as I never stop, but I love every minute. After all the experience I have had, I'm very relaxed about almost everything that goes on in a day at the practice.

I am part of our practice team that carries out fluoride varnish application in schools. In my own time I have also given oral health education to groups within the local community.

dentistry and if I don't know the answer to something immediately I know where to find it; if that's not possible, I always know a colleague who will.

We are fully supported by our practice - in fact Queensway Orthodontics is one of the few practices in the country to have Investors in People gold status.

Our plans for 2017 include rolling out protocols to our newly taken over Jesmond Queensway Dental Clinic plus further development of community outreach. My little project at work at the moment is setting up and working the iTero dental scanner; this allows us to scan patients' teeth instead of taking impressions, then our orthodontic

My daughter loves swimming, gymnastics and dancing so I live my life around her activities.

I am very strict with my daughter's overall daily sugar intake and snacking in between meals. I'm lucky in that she prefers water over juice and loves fruit. I make sure that she brushes her teeth correctly and attends our dentist for routine fluoride applications.

As a family we go away to Germany or the Netherlands yearly in November with a coach load of friends from the UK to visit the Christmas markets. We also have a family holiday home in a village called Staithes near Whitby (this is where the children's television programme 'Old Jack's Boat' is set), and enjoy kayaking, fishing and visiting the beach.

My main hobby, however, is anything dental - I'm always reading and learning. I'm very happy where I am at the moment; I work with an amazing team and wouldn't be where I am today without amazing colleagues over the last 20 years.

I'm in bed by 10 pm - I like my beauty sleep.

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