

Dental nursing in Gibraltar



Angela Streeting is a dental nurse for the MOD in Gibraltar where she enjoys sunshine, the sea and spending time with horses.

I will begin with a quick introduction. My name is Angela, and I grew up in Northern Ireland. My main passions in life are horses and oral health education/prevention. Currently I work overseas in Gibraltar for the Ministry of Defence (MOD) as a civilian dental nurse.

I first began dental nursing part time at the age of 16, becoming full time a few years after that and almost 30 years later I am still thoroughly enjoying my role. I have had the opportunity to work in various positions over the years, including community, dental schools, NHS, and private practice. Every role has been different, and each has had its own challenges, but each role has given me so many opportunities to grow in confidence and experience.

So how did I end up in Gibraltar?

Whilst working as a dental nurse for the MOD in Northern Ireland I met my future husband who was stationed in the camp where I worked. On my husband's retirement

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from military service, we decided to move abroad and as Gibraltar was one of the locations my husband had been stationed, we decided to try and make a life here in the sun.

At first there were no positions for civilian dental nurses within Gibraltar MOD, so I began working for a local family-run one chair dental practice. I found working in Gibraltar very challenging to begin with as dental practices in Gibraltar are not governed

by the GDC or UK Health and Safety laws. Though all procedures are completed to a high standard, a lot of their systems were dated.

To begin with language was a barrier as Gibraltarians have their own unique language where they mix English and Spanish. It was a while before I understood enough of the lingo in order to be involved in the conversations, and of course being so close to Spain we treat

Spanish residents who only speak Spanish. Ordering dental stores from Henry Schein Spain also meant I had to quickly learn the Spanish words for dental instruments and materials.

As a GDC registered dental nurse, maintaining my CPD can be a challenge as there is no requirement for dental nurses to



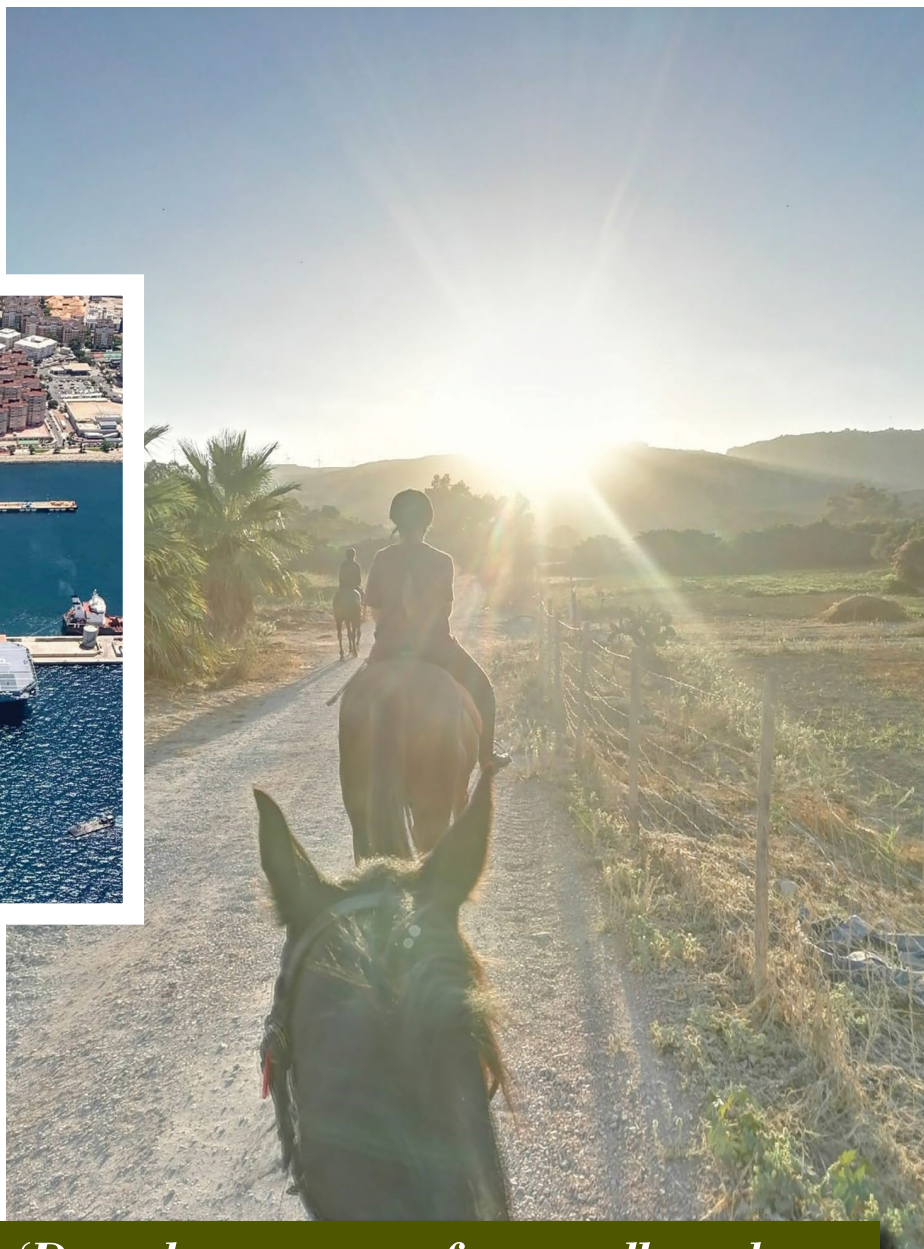
be qualified in Gibraltar therefore there are no courses or training aimed at dental nurses. I fulfil my CPD obligations online using the various CPD subscription sites.

The MOD advertised a civilian dental nurse position and after eight years of working in private practice my successful application saw me return to work for the MOD. This job role gave me the opportunity to reutilise my extended skills and gain further qualifications. British Forces Gibraltar is a tri-service base, treating the Army, Navy, and RAF.

Working overseas has its challenges; dental stores can take a long time to arrive especially since Brexit. Dental materials need constant monitoring as temperatures can soar to the 40s. The high temperatures can also become an issue when mixing cements and alginate as they set so fast.

My biggest challenge, as it was for us all, was during the COVID-19 pandemic. Working for the MOD in Gibraltar meant we had to work not only with the UK guidelines but the Gibraltar government guidelines which often had slight variations. Working in the extreme heat with full COVID PPE, delays in PPE arriving, and conflicting policies was really a frustrating and challenging time.

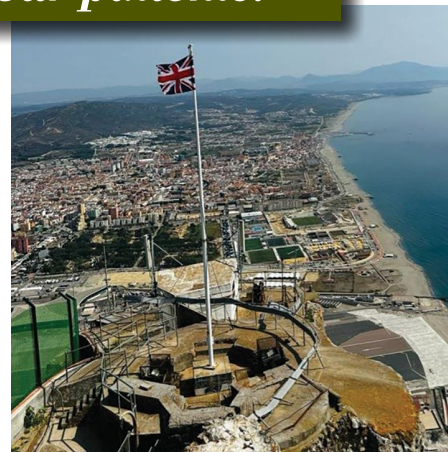
Gibraltar does not have an NHS or equivalent system therefore all adult dental treatment is private. Having worked in



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Gibraltar for 13 years now, I feel very much part of the close-knit community. Dental teams are often small, and you get to enjoy a more personal family feel with your patients.

Also, for me I cannot ignore how very lucky I am to wake up to sunshine 320 days of the year and being surrounded by sea. Spain is on my doorstep, with Marbella only an hour's drive away. Morocco is a short boat trip and on a clear day you can see Africa. There is so much to do and see, and most importantly I get to enjoy my other passion, horses, at the local stables.



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