

‘I’ve had fantastic learning and development opportunities’

Looking for a dental nursing role with a difference? **Romy Slater** found her niche with NHS 24.



Glasgow dental nurse Romy Slater never imagined when she started training that she would eventually be offering assistance to patients over the phone.

Having spent many years in the traditional setting of Glasgow Dental Hospital in the city’s busy Sauchiehall Street, Romy had specialised in various areas including working with children and helping to deliver out-of-hours services.

‘I was approached in December 2005 by NHS 24, as part of a group of eight dental nurses who they wanted to take part in a pilot scheme being set up,’ explains Romy. ‘We decided to give it a go as it was something different to working in the traditional setting of a surgery or the hospital and for me I was certainly keen to learn more about this new kind of service.’

Now approaching her third anniversary at the Scottish Emergency Dental Service (SEDS)

with NHS 24, Romy has never looked back. She combines her work in the sedation suite in Easterhouse with ten hours a week at NHS 24’s new Cardonald centre on Glasgow’s Southside.

‘It’s been the most amazing opportunity since I came to work here,’ explains the busy mum-of-three. ‘I’ve had fantastic learning and development opportunities, thanks to the support of my team and our dental team leader Deborah Devlin.’

‘One of the most fascinating things for me has been really developing my listening skills when working with patients on the phone. It’s been a constant learning curve and it’s great that I have been able to combine this with still working directly with patients in a more traditional setting.’

‘I think the skills I have developed benefit patients whether they are in front of me or I’m talking to them on the phone.’

Romy, who is one of almost 70 dental nurses working for SEDS with NHS 24, says her work often involves giving reassurance to patients, advising them on appropriate pain relief or referring them to out-of-hours services if necessary.

‘Many of the patients who call us are not registered with a dentist and don’t know where to turn when a problem hits. But there’s a lot we can do to offer reassurance and pain relief until they can get to see a dentist.’

Another benefit which Romy enjoys from working at NHS 24 is the flexibility.

‘Being a mum of three young children, it’s

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really important to me to be able to work around my family and with this role I get the best of both worlds.'

She has also been able to progress with her own career and is now a coach with a team of six nurses to mentor and develop.

'We have a really great team here at NHS 24. There's a great spirit and we have a huge range of skill sets even within the dental team, with specialisms from child dental health to

sedation. It's been hugely rewarding for me and I would recommend this as a part or full-time career option for any dental nurse looking for a new and different challenge.'

For more information on opportunities for dental nurses within NHS 24 log on to www.nhs24jobs.com or email recruitment2@nhs24.scot.nhs.uk.

NHS 24

NHS 24 is a telephone advice service for Scotland (telephone 08454 24 24 24). Its confidential telephone health advice and referral service acts as the front end to local out-of-hours services.

Patients can call upon a pool of specialist clinical expertise, including nurses, dental nurses, pharmacists and mental health counsellors within Breathing Space.

NHS 24 offers access to comprehensive health information advice covering a wide range of health issues and services at www.nhs24.com. It works closely with the Scottish Ambulance Service, A&E departments and operate the out-of-hours Scottish Emergency Dental Service, as well as running special helplines in response to local health alerts and campaigns for partner boards.

On a normal day NHS 24 receives on average 100 calls every 15 minutes.