

As a regional major trauma centre with a host of internationally recognised specialist services Cambridge University Hospitals Foundation Trust offers unbeatable careers and staff development

Trauma careers backed by world-class training

As the major trauma centre for the East of England Cambridge University Hospitals Foundation Trust (CUH) has a range of exciting career options for nurses in its emergency, critical care, surgery and rehabilitation services. And excellent in-house training and education enables it to recruit newly qualified nurses and fully support them as they develop the skills they need.

The trust's regional role means it cares for patients with the most serious trauma injuries, so nursing staff need high-level skills and the confidence to use them in pressurised situations. However, CUH is also a leading national centre for specialist treatment and one of only five academic health science centres in the UK, which means it has a pool of talented specialists who can offer world-class training to their colleagues.

"Our biggest asset is the broad range of experience we can draw on to help staff to develop," says Sally Walters, divisional nurse, critical care. "We're an academic centre of excellence doing lots of innovation, and we're very keen to develop skilled and innovative critical care practitioners who are able to meet our patients' needs."

The trust has developed multidisciplinary trauma courses to support staff development. These use a sophisticated patient simulator to work through case scenarios.

"The ED trauma course is very hands-on and enables the team to work together as they learn how to meet trauma patients' needs in the first hour within the emergency department," explains Holly Sutherland, divisional lead nurse, emergency care. "Multidisciplinary working is at the heart of what we do – nurses work closely with consultants and pharmacy colleagues, and we host a primary care team who can help to get patients home as soon as possible.

"We have also introduced a mental health first aid course to give staff a broad awareness of mental health issues and how these can affect the way patients present, and offer grade-specific training away-days and 'guerilla training'. In these unannounced events staff are called away immediately to deal with a case scenario."



Holly Sutherland and Daniel Spooner

The emergency department (ED) works closely with the intensive care and surgical units. In addition to patients from the ED and general medicine, the intensive care units care for those with head injuries and acute neurological conditions, as well as those who have received organ transplants. The trust also has an intermediate dependency unit for patients requiring level 1.5-2 critical care, and a strong critical care outreach service.

"None of our units work in isolation," says Sally. "There is a continuum of care from the ED through to rehab and discharge."

Its worldwide reputation and highly skilled surgical workforce means many surgical patients have extremely complex needs, so its nurses need a wide range of skills. However, CUH is well placed to support them in developing these skills.

The trust has a deep-rooted commitment to staff career development, as the case study below illustrates. It is currently developing a comprehensive 18-month course to offer staff the chance to work across the entire trauma pathway. This will enable them to rotate through the ED, critical care, theatre and surgical and rehab units, developing their skills and deciding which setting suits them best.

"This is a demanding environment," says Holly. "It's hard work, but the benefit of knowing you've done a really good job for very unwell patients is unbeatable."

If you could see your future with Cambridge University Hospitals, visit the nursing recruitment pages on the trust website (cuh.org.uk). You can view the latest vacancies, find out more about living and working in Cambridge, and arrange a visit.

Alternatively, contact nursing recruitment, tel: 01223 217038; email: Nursing@addenbrookes.nhs.uk

Case study: Daniel Spooner, lead nurse, emergency nurse practitioner team

I knew my career would be in A&E even before I qualified as a nurse. I loved its pace and unpredictable nature. My first post was at Addenbrooke's Hospital [part of CUH] on a rotational programme that included a stint in the ED. That was my foot in the door to work there full time.

I joined the emergency nurse practitioner (ENP) team in 2003, soon after it was introduced. The role includes assessment, investigation and diagnosis of patients with minor trauma and minor illness, allowing medical teams to focus on those who are more acutely unwell. I have been lead nurse for around five years and am responsible for staff development and regularly act as shift leader, ensuring patient safety is maintained in a department that is often at capacity.

Attending the ED can be stressful for patients, and it's important to immediately strike a rapport with them to ensure they feel safe, cared for and comfortable. It's very rewarding being able to make see the result of your care quickly.

CUH has supported my development throughout my career. It enabled me to complete my degree and ENP qualifications, and I have received coaching to develop my leadership skills. The trust is committed to supporting staff and provides a nurturing environment to unlock their potential, and that's probably why I'm still here and enjoying my job after 13 years.