



**Sally Pitham 47**  
**Health Care Assistant, Essex**

Sally is trained as a Health Care Assistant based in North-East Essex. Receiving her schedule the evening prior to her working day, she travels to her clients in her car – mostly elderly house bound patients, administering insulin, taking blood samples and dressing wounds, among many other duties.

**What are the essential skills of your job, would you say?**

*I feel that the most essential skills of my job is the ability to listen and being able to build a rapport and empathise with your patient. It is also vital to be able to keep records accurately and know when something is beyond your remit; and be able to report this to the relevant people/office.*

**In what way does this work reflect your own values?**

*I believe that you should treat people the way you would want your loved ones and yourself to be treated when you are unable to care for yourself in the way in which you wish to. Being able to look after people's welfare and able to give them a part of your time, however small, is priceless to some people .*

**What does your job look like on a day to day basis?**

*My working day starts the evening before work, prioritising patient's needs so I go to them first, then I sort out a route so that I don't double back on myself. The day itself starts with me hitting the snooze button half a dozen times!! When I eventually rouse myself I make my way to my first patient of the day, this would normally be insulin administration or blood taking. After this I may be assisting in the leg ulcer clinic in Clacton Hospital, or be in post-op - removing sutures/clips, redressing operation sites and various other practices. I will also have people to see in the community who require various treatments such as new dressings to leg ulcers, post-operation sites redressed, eye drops administered ETC, then there is the administration side of the day where patients may need equipment ordered, making sure all notes are done and up to date. If I'm lucky I may have a chance to go back to the office to have a cuppa, this doesn't happen often and I often go without a lunch break. The working day ends with me making sure that I have enough supplies for the following day, if I don't then I go back to the office and stock up before making my way home .*

**What has your job taught you about yourself?**

*I have learned through this job that I have the ability to empathise with people and that every one of us is different and have different views, it doesn't make you better than me or vice versa, we just have different views. I have also realised that life does come to an end and sometimes it's a difficult path that I have been given the privilege to share with some people and hopefully I have helped them remain comfortable in the winter of their lives.*

**What aspects of your job fulfil your own needs?**

*There are various aspects of my job that help me fulfil my own needs, like helping others. I also never thought that I was academic enough to learn the various medical knowledge that is needed to do this job, so I am proud of myself that at the age of 46 I completed a course that is equivalent to an A level that enabled me to do this job and also the continued learning of protocols and procedures that are entailed in keeping my knowledge up to speed. I have grown in confidence and have also learned to appreciate other people's life journeys. I can't see myself in a job that wouldn't allow me to be the person that I have become through this job role.*

**What motivates you to get up in the morning?**

*My motivation for getting up in the morning is simple really, I do the job I do because I like people, I like seeing them smile when they see me because they know that for a short time they have someone to speak with; I like making them feel special for a while. I think it's very important to work, whatever the job, everyone needs something to do, a purpose to get out of bed and although money plays a part, we all have to pay bills. I wouldn't be doing the job I'm doing if I wanted to be a millionaire as Nursing, at any level, is poorly paid. I think we all do it because we like helping people.*

**What are the more challenging or difficult experiences associated with your work ?**

*There are challenges in the role I do. Caring for someone for a time and then losing them can be difficult, especially if they are not elderly. Also a small minority of people really don't want you in their homes and don't appreciate what you do for them so again social skills are essential and many of these types of people come round and become a pleasure to treat.*



**How has your work contributed to your awareness of other cultures ?**

*We now live in a multicultural world and it's essential that we have an understanding of people's beliefs, as these are an integral part of some people's lives, e.g.*

*Removal of shoes in the homes of Muslims. In a nursing role it would not be safe for us to remove shoes on visits to patients as infection control has to be very high. To overcome this we wear overshoes.*

*Blood transfusion for Jehovah Witnesses, is not something that we would be doing in the community but we need to be aware.*

*Don't turn a light on Shabbat for Judaism. Shabbat is the Sabbath day for Jewish people. When we initially visit a patient we do ask about religious beliefs, so this would be recorded and we would make sure that we didn't visit on Shabbat or that it was the day time if we did need to go.*

**What advice would you give to anyone considering a career?**

*If you want job satisfaction, if you want to help people, if you want to feel like you make a positive difference to someone's life, if you're not shy of hard work with long hours with little pay, this may be the job for you. You can't go into a nursing role expecting sweetness and light; it's a very demanding job and needs commitment, compassion, and empathy towards others. As long as you go into this role with your eyes open it's the most rewarding job on the planet .*

**Write your own question and answer it**

*If I had my time over again, would I take this career path?  
The answer is yes and no. I would have definitely gone into a Healthcare role but I would have joined the Army and become a Medic, this would have opened many more doors for me as my life progressed but I am happy with my lot and can't complain.*