

Alex Upham

Currently working as... ED Charge Nurse

Joined the RUH as... a Staff Nurse

How long have you been at the RUH? Seven years in total (two years in Oncology & Haematology, five in ED)

Where do you live? Bristol

Where are you from originally? Bath

“My background is in PR, so I came to nursing relatively late. Perhaps because of this, I’ve been driven – right from the outset – to push my career in the direction I want it to go.

“My hospital placements during my training were all at the RUH, and they confirmed for me that I wanted to work in an acute setting. In my final year of nurse training, I did a few shifts in ED with a then-Junior Sister and I knew that ED was where I was ultimately headed.

“After graduation, I worked on William Budd (the Oncology & Haematology ward at the RUH) for two years. Those years helped to give me a sense of familiarity and security, and a strong base in which to develop my nursing skills. It’s vitally important to have a solid foundation before moving on to a challenging acute setting such as ED. Now I am a Band 6 Charge Nurse in ED – working alongside the same (now-Senior) Sister who inspired and encouraged me during my training.

“I am currently on a six-month secondment to the Clinical Site Team – which is great, as it has given me a good overview of how the hospital system fits together and of the many factors that have an impact on flow. We are encouraged to take opportunities for professional development and come back armed with knowledge and experience that can help us to improve and inform our practice in ED.

“There are so many opportunities to make your mark here. As part of my application process to become a Band 6, I developed an initiative to improve the early detection and treatment of Sepsis at the front door. The pro-forma I developed is now in use in the department and helps to save lives.

“Being progressive, innovative and forward-thinking is a growing expectation of nurses and other professionals working in ED. If you can identify a problem, and then come up with a solution, you can make a really meaningful contribution to the department – and to our patients. The RUH is a place where you can make a real difference.”

“Having worked in ED for five years, I still leave the department after a busy shift with that ‘rush’ and a feeling of deep satisfaction – knowing I have done a good job even in the face of adversity.”

“I’m driven to progress my career - and the senior team is right behind me every step of the way”

“We save lives. That might sound grand but it’s true. And that’s pretty remarkable”

“Our ED is progressive, innovative and forward-thinking. You can make a real difference working here”