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CAN YOU TELL US A BIT ABOUT YOUR CURRENT ROLE AND HOW YOU CAN HELP PEOPLE AFFECTED BY CANCER?

So I'm an upper and lower GI nurse endoscopist and I see patients after they've been referred for investigations by their GP or hospital consultant. I diagnose their condition, take samples and order further investigations for them, and I've been doing that for three-and-a-half years.

HOW DID YOU COME TO WORK IN THE ONCOLOGY FIELD?

So, there was an opportunity to train as a nurse endoscopist from within the existing nursing team in the endoscopy unit where I work, and the OU has taught me that you need to grab every opportunity as it comes along.

WHAT MOTIVATES YOU TO WORK IN AN AREA THAT MANY PEOPLE WOULD THINK IS REALLY CHALLENGING OR HARD?

I find that being able to tell patients there and then, within seconds of their investigation, what I've found, whether that's good or bad news, is incredibly rewarding. I do have the support of a team of clinical nurse specialists who see the patient with me. And it can be emotional at times, but I think being able to tell people what's going on, what's been causing their symptoms and what's going to happen next is still quite rewarding.

CAN YOU TELL US HOW YOU CAME TO STUDY AT THE OU?

So, I was already working in the hospital as a nursing assistant at the time and knew that I wanted to do more, but couldn't afford to completely leave work and go back to university the traditional way. And when the opportunity came up to study with the OU and continue to be on my current salary, I just grabbed the opportunity. It was the only way that I was going to be able to do my nurse training.

HOW HAS STUDYING WITH THE OU PREPARED YOU FOR WORK IN ONCOLOGY?

I think being a mature student makes you appreciate people's life experiences and how cancer impacts on them. And the first year of the OU course is all about how the NHS works, and that helps you to understand how services support patients through their journey and treatment.

WHAT ARE THE BEST BITS ABOUT STUDYING AT THE OU?

All the course materials that you get delivered to your home are absolutely fantastic, and it means that you can refer to them as often as you like, so you can go back to them time and time again, which you can't do in a traditional university where you have to take notes. And you can keep the materials forever, so I still go back and refer to the materials that I've got now.

[End of interview]