



*Working  
in the  
Community*



**Public Health And  
Community Nursing**



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## *What is Community Nursing?*

Public Health and Community Nursing teams provide vital care either in or close to people's homes. With their leadership, clinical nursing skills, and expertise, they empower individuals to manage long-term health conditions while promoting their independence. This type of nursing care can help reduce hospital admissions and enable earlier discharges.

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) and Community Nurses deliver comprehensive care and support to families in various settings, including homes, primary care facilities, schools and clinics. The PHN plays a vital role in the early stages of a child's life and in supporting families. They aim to visit all newborns within 72 hours of discharge from maternity services. This primary visit focuses on assessment of the mother and newborn, while also providing education and support for the family. Before the child reaches the age of five, the PHN conducts a further 4 health and development assessments. The PHN role is essential in early childhood health, offering health information, supporting vaccine and screening programs, linking families to reliable resources, and raising awareness of local services. They provide guidance, advocate for necessary health measures, and make referrals or follow-up visits as needed, ensuring families have access to the care and resources they require.

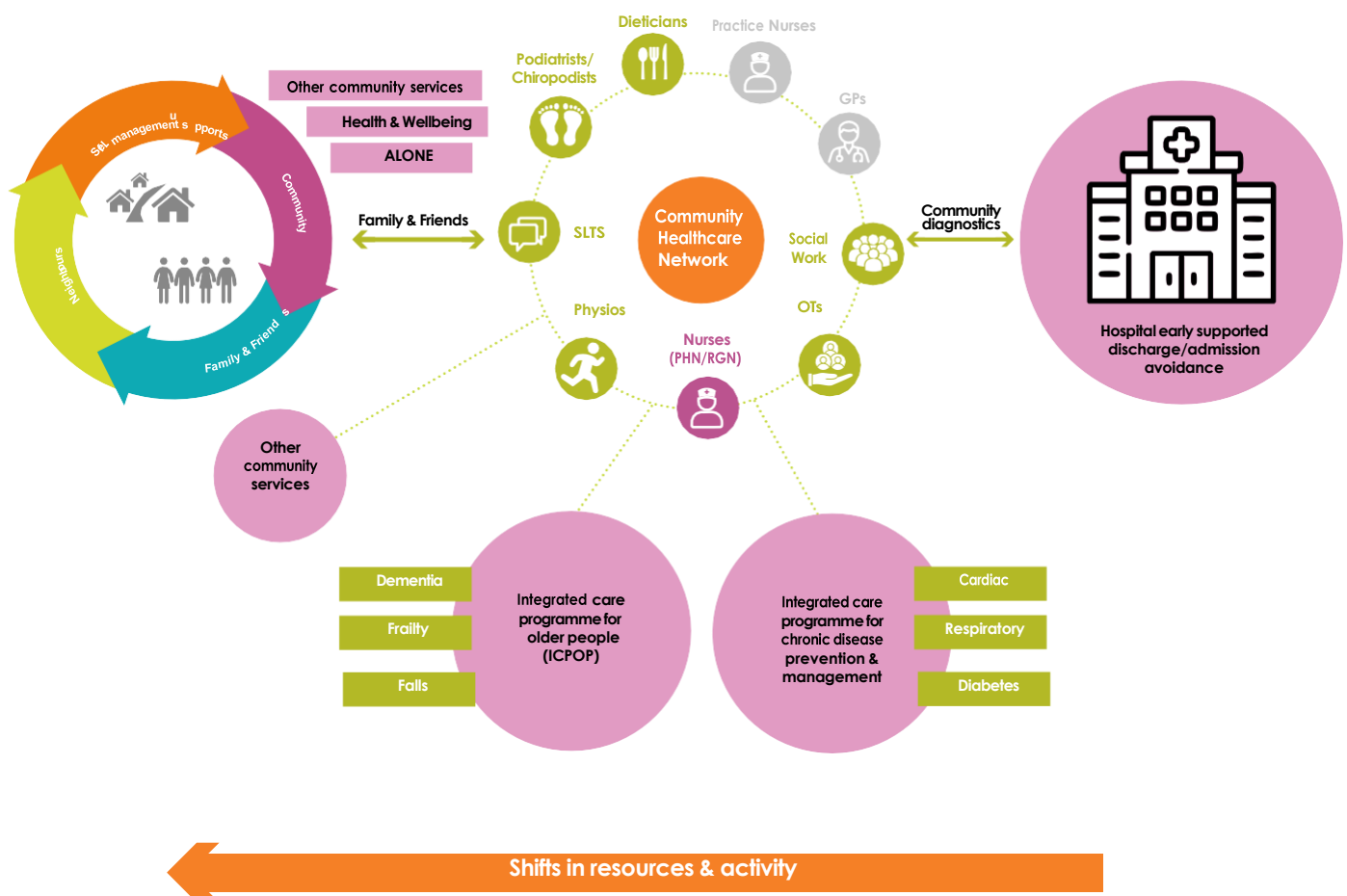
Community nursing includes a broad variety of roles beyond the hospital setting. The introduction of Sláintecare, which focuses on delivering appropriate care at the right place and time, has opened up significant opportunities for professional growth in the field of community nursing.

# Where do PHNs and Community Nurses Work?

The enhanced community care model is currently being implemented and public health and community nursing will play a significant role in this change model. Specialist teams for the management of chronic disease and the care of the older person are in development.

The service is delivered within a range of settings: in the home, health centres, schools and in a variety of community settings. As pivotal team members, Public Health and Community Nursing staff work in collaboration and partnership with other members of the primary care team and also with acute / community hospital services, voluntary bodies and statutory and non-statutory agencies.

## Shift in Resources to the Community



**Enhanced Community Care Model (2022)**

# Why work in the Community?

- ✓ *Autonomous practitioner*
- ✓ *Build relationships with patients, families and communities*
- ✓ *Diverse workload – every day is different*
- ✓ *Work with individuals and families across the lifespan*
- ✓ *Professional Development*

If you like meeting new people, planning your daily work, learning new skills and feeling confident in your nursing abilities, public health and/or community nursing will give you the opportunity and job satisfaction to carry this out.

Becoming a Public Health Nurse or Community Nurse enables you to work in a variety of settings, ranging from health centres, clinics and schools to patients' own homes. Often working independently or as part of the multidisciplinary team, you will need to be able to adapt well and quickly to new environments: this job is perfect for someone who wants to challenge themselves and develop their skillset, whilst giving back to the community.



**Áine**  
RGN

“

People don't realise how much goes on in the community. We are linking in all the time with other professionals such as General Practitioners, Public Health Nurses, Dieticians and Speech and Language Therapists for example. They may not be in the same building but they are part of the team. We are helping people stay at home in their own environments by providing continuous care.

”



**Clodagh**  
STUDENT PHN

“

There's a great variety of work in the community and you get lots of support from PHNs and from RGN colleagues who are always willing to help. I enjoy the autonomy in the job. You have your own caseload and there is continuity of care for the patients.

”



**Gemma**  
PHN

“

Becoming a Public Health Nurse was always on my radar. When I was completing my undergraduate studies, I spend two weeks on community placement. I got to shadow a PHN and it was inspiring to see how she was integral to her local community. She knew her community and her caseload and was self-motivated and driven. I wanted that for myself.

”



**Chinnu**  
CNS

“

In the community we deal with a lot of referrals from Consultants and GPs. We are bringing some of our acute knowledge to the community and helping people to stay out of hospital longer.

”



Community nurses use a holistic approach with each of the patients that they see, assessing areas including mobility, diet, home layout, physical functioning and mental wellbeing, reviewing more specific health issues, providing clinical care and referring clients to other members of the multidisciplinary team if required.

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) work with new mothers, babies, children and adults across the lifespan. They offer guidance and information to clients about how best to meet their health needs. The PHN role involves health promotion, assessment of needs, providing clinical care and coordinating care.

PHNs provide a generalist nursing service to a broad range of patient or client groups including older people who live at home, people who are chronically or acutely ill, mothers who have recently given birth and children (settings include infant and child health services and school health services).

Working as part of the community and integrated care teams, CNSs (Clinical Nurse Specialists) and ANPs (Advanced Nurse Practitioners) provide expertise and specialist care to clients in the community across a wide range of specialities including chronic disease, child health and wound care.

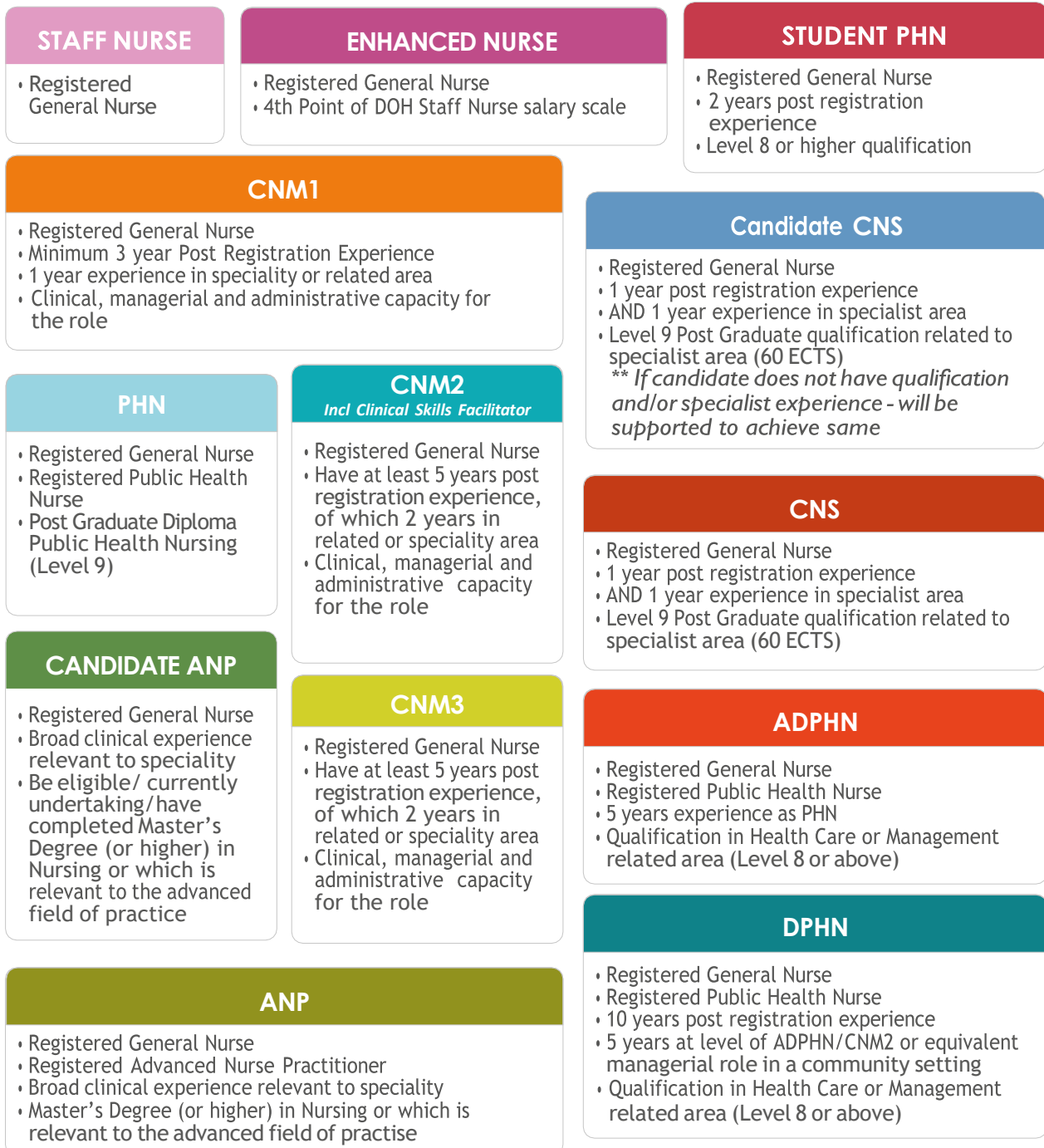


# Opportunities to progress your career within Public Health and Community Nursing

## >>> CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT >>>

>>> EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE >>>

>>> EXPANDING PROFESSIONAL COMPETENCE >>>



## <<< CONTINUOUS PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT <<<

## Staff Nurse General (Community)

### PURPOSE OF THE POST

Registered general nurses (RGNs) work alongside the PHN. The primary focus of the RGN is on individual patients and care of the older person. The RGN works closely with the PHN to assess, plan and implement nursing care and works in the home and clinic environment. RGNs undertake relevant education and training programmes relative to their role in community nursing.

### QUALIFICATIONS

Be registered, or be eligible for registration, in the General Nurse Division of the Register of Nurses kept by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland [NMBI] (Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann).

### MUST HAVE SKILLS

- Effective planning and organising skills
- Good time management
- Problem solver
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work alone
- Confident decision maker
- Teamwork

### SALARY

The salary scale for this post adheres to national HSE approved salary scales.



<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/pay/pay-scales/>

This post may also attract qualification allowance and premium payments.

# Working in the Community: Staff Nurse

Áine Walton is a Registered General Nurse working in the community based in Urlingford, Co Kilkenny. It's a 25 minute drive from her home and Áine really appreciates the work/life balance the role gives her and the opportunity to see family and friends regularly.

Áine started her nursing career in St Luke's Hospital in Kilkenny and worked for three-and-a-half years mainly in care of the elderly. During this time, she collaborated closely with Public Health Nurses, physiotherapists, continence advisors, home support workers and occupational therapists.



## A Day in the Life :

### Áine Walton, Staff Nurse

#### How does your day start?

*My day starts when I come into the office to look in the diary to see what I have planned for myself for the day ahead, but I have learned to be flexible as we never know what messages are waiting for us on the phone or in our emails.*

#### Tell us about the team you work with?

*I am very lucky to be part of a fantastic team. I work closely with the public health nurse. We share the office in our health centre and we are lucky to have a physiotherapist and an occupational therapist to work closely with in the community. We have access to the regular primary care team meetings and this provides us with a great back up or a supportive space to discuss any of our more complex cases. We also have GPs and practice nurses who also work alongside us in the health centre.*

#### What does your typical working day involve?

*I try to keep the basis of all my days the same, splitting my day into three parts: the health centre clinic, home reviews and paperwork. This is the idea I strive for but it doesn't always go to plan. I am in the office for 9am to check the voicemail on the phone and to allow time to reply to my emails. I try to start my clinic in the health centre at 9.30/10am with the aim of being on the road to start the home clinical visits around 11.30/12. No two days are the same, but I do try to aim to be back in the health centre around 3.30pm to complete my paperwork and send necessary referrals or emails to complete for that day.*

#### What motivates you in your work?

*My motivation is simple, I like to provide the best care possible to keep the person safe in their own home. Whether they are on my case load for a wound dressing,*

*for end of life care, for home supports or continence wear, I find it rewarding to see each person as an individual and provide the best care possible, allowing them to continue to live their life as independently as possible in their own home.*

#### What do you enjoy most about your role?

*I enjoy learning about the patients under my care. I enjoy learning about their life stories and about their families, to really get to know the person as a whole and the challenges they have faced in their lives and to live through the happy times with them. When we go out to visit them in their homes, I like to look at my role as someone who has a positive impact on that person's day. Sometimes just taking the time to ask someone how their day is and taking the time to listen makes all the difference. Time is the best gift you can give anyone!*

#### What advice would you give someone considering a career in Community RGN?

**“Go for it! You won't know if you will like it if you don't take the chance.”**

# Student PHN

## PURPOSE OF THE POST

The Student Public Health Nurse, under the direction of the Director of Public Health Nursing and/or designate, will be expected to develop the skills and knowledge, which will enable them, upon registration, to provide a range of nursing interventions in primary and community nursing settings, which includes prevention, education and health promotion.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Be registered on the Register of Nurses kept by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland [NMBI] (Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann) as Registered General Nurse
  - Minimum of 2 years post registration general nursing experience
- OR**
- Be registered in the General Nursing Division and another Division of the Register (RCN/ RM/RNID/RPN)
  - Minimum of 12 months general nursing experience and 12 months experience (RM/ RNID/RCN/RPN)
  - Level 8 or higher qualification

## MUST HAVE SKILLS

- Effective planning and organising skills
- Good time management
- Problem solver
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work alone
- Confident decision maker
- Teamwork

## SALARY

The salary scale for this post adheres to national HSE approved salary scales



<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/pay/pay-scales/>

## Working in the Community: Student PHN

We spoke to Clodagh Brackett in October 2024. At that time Clodagh was a Student Public Health Nurse based in Blackrock in Cork city and was attending UCC. Clodagh joined the Student PHN Sponsorship Post-graduate Programme in September 2024.

Clodagh gained experience of working in both the hospital environment and in the community while completing a Graduate Nurse Rotation Programme.



### A Day in the Life : Clodagh Brackett, Student PHN

#### How does your day start?

Currently I am on clinical placement in my assigned primary care centre. I am based in the South Lee area of Cork city. When I arrive in the office I am greeted by my PHN preceptor and we go through the day's tasks. Every day is different to the previous day.

#### What does your typical working day involve?

As the public health nursing service cares for people at every stage of life each day can look vastly different to the next. On a typical day I will go on house calls with my preceptor and these can range from attending to wound dressings to continence assessments to general assessments following a referral to the PHN service or a home visit to a new mother and baby following discharge from the maternity hospital.

After the home visits we will come back to the primary care centre and complete all the relevant documentation that may include follow up and referrals to various other services and therapies.

1pm (or whatever lunch time is) We grab a bite to eat and chat with other staff members in the tea room.

After lunch we're back in the office this time to answer any phone messages or post that may have come in since the morning. Once that is done we move down the corridor to the child health clinics.

PHN's conduct child developmental checks at various stages prior to the children starting school. Some

days we might have 3-month-olds, other days, 9-11 months, 2-year-olds or 4- year-olds. In line with the National Healthy Childhood programme PHNs assess children to ensure they are meeting the age appropriate developmental milestones.

#### What advice would you give someone considering the Student PHN course?

**“ Trying to balance study/ placement and family time can be tricky but it is well worth the reward. ”**

# Public Health Nurse

## PURPOSE OF THE POST

Public Health Nurses (PHNs) deliver care across the lifespan to individuals, families and communities. The focus of the service is to promote health and well-being, protect the public and provide clinical nursing care to the population through the delivery of high-quality evidence based nursing care. The PHN delivers and coordinates a broad based integrated prevention, education and health promotion nursing service as part of the Primary Care Team, delivering an integrated model of care in accordance with national agreements.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Be registered in the Public Health Nurse Division of the Register of Nurses maintained by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland [NMBI] (Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann).

## MUST HAVE SKILLS

- Effective planning and organising skills
- Good time management
- Problem solver
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work alone
- Confident decision maker
- Teamwork

## SALARY

The salary scale for this post adheres to national HSE approved salary scales.



<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/pay/pay-scales/>

This post may also attract qualification allowance and premium payments.

## Working in the Community: PHN

The Public Health Nurse (PHN) plays a key role in community healthcare by providing both preventative and curative care. PHNs deliver clinical care in homes and communities, managing acute, chronic, and palliative care needs. They monitor the health of infants, children, mothers, and families, including carrying out home visits after hospital discharge and child developmental screenings. PHNs also contribute to child welfare by identifying at-risk families and collaborating with social workers and healthcare providers to ensure child safety and well-being.

### Lorraine Cleary | PHN

Lorraine Cleary works as a Public Health Nurse in Grangegorman in Dublin having previously worked in the Kidney Transplant Unit in Beaumont Hospital. Lorraine also spent nine years working in Australia in various roles, most recently as a Clinical Nurse Manager. During her time in Australia she had the opportunity to work within the community setting. This insight subsequently led her to apply for the role of PHN community setting.

#### What aspects of your work do you enjoy most?

*"It's very dynamic who you are seeing and where you are seeing them. Every day is a new challenge. There's variety in what you do but it's not overwhelming. There is great job satisfaction. You are helping people to achieve a better quality of life and you are not just looking after the patient but their family as well."*

**“You are very much at the centre, bringing everyone together.”**

### Gemma Donegan | PHN

Gemma Donegan is a Public Health Nurse working in the Primary Care Centre in Shannon, Co Clare.

Prior to becoming a Public Health Nurse Gemma worked for four years as a midwife and for three years as a general nurse.

Gemma says there is a huge variety in her workdays from assisting new parents during the postnatal period to caring for patients on their end of life journey and everything in between.

*"Now that I am working as a Public Health Nurse I find the staff I work with really supportive."*

**“There is always someone to connect with and my manager is really accessible.”**



# Community Intervention Team

## PURPOSE OF THE TEAM

A Community Intervention Team (CIT) is a specialist, health professional team which provides a rapid and integrated response to a patient with an acute episode of illness who requires enhanced services/acute intervention for a defined short period of time. This may be provided at home, in a residential setting or in the community as deemed appropriate, thereby avoiding acute hospital attendance or admission, or facilitating early discharge.

The CIT, through its fast-tracked provision of services enhances the overall primary care system, providing access to nursing and home care support, usually from 8am to 9pm, seven days per week. Referrals are accepted from hospitals, GP's and other community sources.

## SERVICES PROVIDED

Services provided include but are not limited to the following:

- Administration of IV antibiotics;
- Acute anticoagulation management;
- Urinary related care;
- Ostomy Care;
- Medication Management;
- Enhanced Nurse Monitoring;
- Care of patients with respiratory illness;
- Acute wound care and dressings

## OPPORTUNITIES

Opportunities within Community Intervention Teams include:  
Staff Nurse, CNM1/2, CNS and ANP

# Working in the Community: CIT

## Razick Fareth Thomas | STAFF NURSE CIT

Razick Fareth Thomas is a staff nurse working with the Community Intervention Team (CIT) in Rathfarnham, Co Dublin. He previously worked in a surgical ward at the Mercy University Hospital in Cork.

From Kerala state in southern India, Razick was recommended to progress his nursing career in Ireland by a cousin who was living here.

He is one of 20 nurses working in the CIT and his work involves liaising with Public Health Nurses, GPs and hospitals in south Dublin. The team also takes care of patients treated in north Dublin hospitals when the patient is residing in its catchment area.

*“The best part of my job is the acute care we are providing and I am able to apply my acute nursing skills in a community setting. We are providing services like phlebotomy, oncology services, palliative care, catheterization, IV antibiotics, pleural drains, and wound care. We are helping people avoid having to go to hospital or enabling them to return home from hospital sooner. They are so welcoming when we visit them at home so the work is very satisfying.”*

**“ I would recommend working in a CIT to other nurses. ”**

## Namitha Gearty | STAFF NURSE CIT

Namitha Gearty is working as a staff nurse with the Community Intervention Team based in Athlone and covering Longford, Westmeath and parts of Offaly. Living in Longford she previously worked as a Registered General Nurse in the community with the Longford Integrated Care Team. Namitha's work includes the care of cancer patients in the community, including management of central venous access devices, pre chemotherapy bloods and disconnection of chemotherapy pumps.

**“ The care we provide helps to cut down on the number of hospital visits people need to make. ”**



# Clinical Nurse Specialist

## PURPOSE OF THE POST

Clinical Nurse Specialists (CNS) are registered nurses who have expanded their role and developed specially focused knowledge and skills required to work in a defined area of speciality, within the healthcare services. The post holder's practice is based on the five core concepts of the CNS or CMS role: Clinical Focus, Client Advocate, Education and Training, Audit and Research and Consultant Clinical Focus.

## QUALIFICATIONS

- Be registered on the General division of the Register of Nurses kept by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland [NMBI] (Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann)
- 1 year Post Registration experience AND 1 year experience in the specialist area
- Level 9 Post Graduate qualification related to the Specialist field (60 ECTS)

## MUST HAVE SKILLS

- Effective planning and organising skills
- Good time management
- Problem solver
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work alone
- Confident decision maker
- Teamwork

## SALARY

The salary scale for this post adheres to national HSE approved salary scales.



<https://healthservice.hse.ie/staff/pay/pay-scales/>

This post may also attract qualification allowances.

## Working in the Community: CNS

### Sasikala Velappan | CNS DIABETES

Sasikala Velappan is originally from Kerala state in India. She is now working as a Clinical Nurse Specialist, Diabetes at the Chronic Disease Management Hub in Glasnevin in Dublin North Central. Sasikala came to Ireland in 2008. While working in the Mater Hospital she was encouraged by a colleague to complete a Diploma in Diabetes Nursing at UCD. She worked in the Diabetes Day Centre in the Mater before moving to the community in January 2024. Mother to three boys Sasikala says her work/life balance is very important to her.

**“I like the autonomy the role affords me and the regular follow-up review of patients.”**

*“I can get to know them well and gain their trust. We can have a good conversation and it makes it easier to assess and focus on patient needs. People with diabetes can have complex needs and diabetes is becoming more and more common. Complications can arise from diabetes and it’s about enabling patients to achieve stable glycaemic control to avoid or delay those complications.”*

### Chinnu Joseph | CNS CARDIOLOGY

Chinnu Joseph is a Clinical Nurse Specialist (CNS) Cardiology working in the Integrated Care Programme for Chronic Disease Management (ICPCD) Dublin North. Chinnu joined the ICPCD in Dublin North aligned with Beaumont Hospital in September 2022. Chinnu spends 80% of her role working in the ICPCD hub and 20% in Beaumont Hospital where she provides an Inpatient education service to patients with Heart Failure. Chinnu became a nurse prescriber in 2023 which has led to enhancement of her CNS role.

**“We try to keep people out of hospital, especially heart failure patients who are particularly vulnerable for hospitalisation. We optimise patient’s medications and modify their risk factors to improve their symptoms and quality of life.”**



# Advanced Nurse Practitioner

## PURPOSE OF THE POST

Advanced practitioners are educated to master's degree level and have the competencies to be senior decision makers that undertake a comprehensive advanced physical and/or mental health assessment of patients with complex multiple healthcare needs. They can interpret the results of multiple different assessments and investigations to make a diagnosis, and plan and deliver care.

## QUALIFICATIONS

Be registered on the Register of Nurses kept by the Nursing & Midwifery Board of Ireland [NMBI] (Bord Altranais agus Cnáimhseachais na hÉireann) as:

- Registered General Nurse
- Registered Advanced Nurse Practitioner

Have a broad base of clinical experience relevant to the advanced field of practice

Demonstrate the competencies relevant to the specialist area of advanced practice

## MUST HAVE SKILLS

- Effective planning and organising skills
- Good time management
- Problem solver
- Excellent communication skills
- Ability to work alone
- Confident decision maker
- Teamwork

## SALARY

The salary scale for this post adheres to national HSE approved salary scales



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# Working in the Community: ANP

## Aileen Tierney | CANDIDATE ANP UROLOGY

Aileen was working as a registered general nurse in Mayo University Hospital and then moved to the community. While working in the community an opportunity arose in the area of continence management, which Aileen has a specific interest in. Based in the Integrated Specialist Continence Care Service, Primary Care Centre, Castlebar, Co. Mayo. Aileen is a candidate Advanced Nurse Practitioner (cANP) in Urology. Aileen has undertaken a number of courses in her specialist area including a Post Graduate Diploma in Continence Care at the University of Ulster.

*“Continence issues can affect people of any age and health status but is not an inevitable consequence of aging. Our service promotes continence and manages continence issues providing ease of access to people in the community with home and clinic visits, reducing pressure on the acute services and*

***...having a significant impact on people’s quality of life”***



## Felicity McFadden | RANP RESPIRATORY INTEGRATED CARE

Felicity McFadden has previously worked as a PHN and is now working as an Advanced Nurse Practitioner (RANP) in Respiratory Integrated Care within Cavan Monaghan Primary Care Centres and The Chronic Disease Management Hub in Co. Monaghan. Felicity is leading an ANP clinic within the community setting in Obstructive Sleep Apnoea (OSA), Asthma and Insomnia. The goals are to reduce the hospital Out Patient Department (OPD) waiting list, provide holistic care and meet service needs closer to the patient’s home in a more timely manner.

***“What I enjoy most about my role is no one day is the same for me!”***

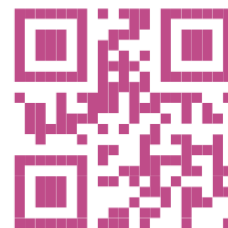


*I love working independently and autonomously as an ANP within various primary care settings within a defined caseload. I enjoy meeting each patient in various locations and hearing their unique story of living with their health conditions. I also enjoy collaborating with others within the team with the sharing of knowledge and experiences in practice. This includes discussing new innovative and safer ways in improving our practice within this new area of integrated care”.*

## Further information

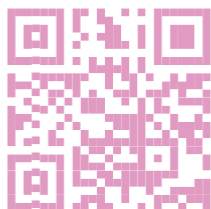
### *Don't Miss Out!*

If you would like to work in one of our Community Nursing Teams based all over the country keep an eye out for opportunities by regularly visiting our careers page at [hse.ie/jobs](https://hse.ie/jobs)



#### WEEKLY JOB ALERTS

To ensure that you are informed of all vacancies please register with us at [careerhub.hse.ie](https://careerhub.hse.ie) for weekly job alerts.



#### STUDENT PHN

To find out how to apply for the Student PHN Sponsorship Postgraduate Programme visit <https://healthservice.hse.ie/about-us/onmsd/education-and-continuous-professional-development/cpd-for-nurses-and-midwives/onmsd-sponsorship-schemes/student-public-health-nurses.html>



#### MOVING TO IRELAND?

If you are living abroad and would like to learn more about the HSE you will find information about working and living in Ireland at [careerhub.hse.ie](https://careerhub.hse.ie).

