Heather's revalidation story

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Heather is a learning disabilities nurse at a day care centre in Northern Ireland.

Practice hours and CPD

Heather works regular full time hours, so meeting the practice hours requirement and providing evidence of this was straightforward. The CPD requirement, too, was not something that she found difficult – even the participatory element.

> "We have training days where everybody's involved, or people come in to give talks, so it's all group learning," she explains. "That requirement was easily met."

The important thing is to keep track of what you are doing. Heather's advice would be to write down rough notes every time you complete some CPD, including what you did and the date that you did it. You then have this on record and you can transfer it to the CPD template when you get home.

Feedback

Obtaining feedback was the aspect of revalidation Heather felt less comfortable with.

> "I think initially that was my biggest fear," she says. "We weren't really sure what the NMC were looking for. But I think it's a lot clearer now what feedback actually consists of."
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> As a learning disabilities nurse for children, she explains, "It's harder to get feedback from your patients. But you have regular care reviews with the parents, so you could use that as feedback."

As well as using these care review meetings, Heather made notes on emails that she had received, recording details of what the feedback was and what she had learnt from it. She also used cards and letters from students that she had worked with and feedback from her clinical supervisor.

Reflective accounts

When it came to writing her reflective accounts, Heather says the first reflection she wrote was quite in depth. After sharing examples with other nurses, though, she realised her accounts didn't actually need to go into so much detail and if you follow the NMC template, you can't go wrong.

> "Five accounts over a three year period is definitely achievable," she says, adding, "Especially if you focus on things that you're really interested in, you'll fly through it."

Reflective discussion and confirmation

Because her line manager is a social worker, Heather needed to find another NMC registrant to have the reflective discussion with, so she chose the nurse who she has regular clinical supervision with. Heather found it helpful to talk through her reflective accounts with somebody else from a clinical background, who was familiar with her practice.

Following their discussion of each of Heather's reflections, the same nurse then went through the rest of the evidence in Heather's portfolio and provided confirmation that all of the requirements had been met.

Heather's main piece of advice for those preparing to revalidate is simply not to panic.

> "It is definitely achievable," she says. "It's really good to take a step back and look at what you're doing, why you're doing it, and relate it back to the Code."