

the patients. In 1892, however, the nurses began courses of ten lessons in dietetics and sick cookery at the Gloucestershire School of Cookery and gradually took over the responsibility for the special diets. This was remarked upon in an article about the school in the Nursing Mirror in 1910 and was not altered until a dietician was appointed in the 1940s.

In November 1896 the first photographs were taken in the hospital by means of Rontgen Rays. Later, a nurse was appointed to assist in the rapidly growing department and in the 1930s the X-ray sister was being sent to attend a four-day course in X-ray techniques at the Victory X-ray Corporation for a fee of three guineas. In November 1916 the Massage, Electricity and Radial Heat Department was opened with a massage sister in charge. She had attended a course for masseuses and by 1929 the sister in charge was expected to hold a post nurse registration certificate of the Chartered Society in Massage, and Medical Gymnastics. In the 1920s nurses were being sent on pharmaceutical courses prior to appointment as assistant to the dispenser in the pharmacy. These were all extensions to the nurses' role that were eventually to develop into the para-medical professions and a subsequent contraction in the role again.

This process appears almost violent alongside two other areas of nursing in Gloucester during the same period. Yet in a similar but much slower fashion the roles of the nurses in the local Lunatic Asylum and Workhouse Infirmary also expanded and contracted over this period.

The formation of the Gloucester Union as a result of the 1834 Poor Law reforms resulted in the building of a Workhouse Infirmary. The Gloucester Guardians were unusual in that they appointed a nurse from the start and their advert stated that "none need apply who are not thoroughly competent to perform their duties". The nurse was allowed an extra sovereign per annum to provide "all the basins and chamber pots necessary to do her job". One nurse looked after an average of 70 to 80 patients and, when it was suggested she needed an assistant, an enquiry had to be held. The enquiry found that 40 patients were taking medicines; 20 others were under treatment by gargles, lotions, bandages, etc. A further 24 were not really ill but aged and infirm, but nevertheless able to assist in the various wards. No assistant was appointed but the nurse was given a f5 rise. In 1868 six paupers were officially made wardsmen and assistant washers in the hospital.

By the 1880s there were two assistant nurses and at the end of the century they were taking probationers for a one-year training. The hospital also had a trained superintendent nurse. Slowly the Poor Law nurses also took on more and more tasks as newer treatments became commonplace but they were always looked down upon by their Gloucester (now Royal) Infirmary colleagues. The Infirmary consistently refused approaches by the Guardians to allow the nurses at the Union Infirmary to obtain experience in acute surgical nursing to enable them to offer a complete training and it was not until the coming of the National Health Service (NHS) that the two training schools were amalgamated. Several nurses who had never registered under the Nurses Registration Act (1919) continued to carry out full nursing duties including dressings and injections until 1930 when the hospital became the City General and the responsibility of the local government.