

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF CHILDREN'S DAY CARE UNIT

**Lesley Ryan, Sister, Paediatric Day Care Unit
Royal Lancaster Infirmary**

Another day, and before we start there are three extra patients, all arriving before 8.30am, and that's on top of those already expected. Ah well, we are getting used to this.

As part of a normal day we deal with a large number of young patients coming to us for a great variety of procedures, tests, reviews and day surgery.

There is certainly never a dull moment on our unit these days. We pride ourselves that those children who do visit our day centre are treated to as calm and pleasant a time as possible, even when undergoing invasive procedures and tests.

The fact that they also have to listen to some of our very old jokes (and, worse, some slightly iffy singing of songs) does make them and their parents smile. Many of our young charges don't want to go home. The wheels on the bus most certainly do go round! A bravery certificate, a smiley face plaster and a sticker all help the medicine go down.

We have perfected the art of bubble-blowing, which is the ideal distraction when hunting for tiny veins. We also act as a source of information for many of our multidisciplinary team members and are very capable at detective work when faced with requests for tests we have never seen before. Challenge Anika just doesn't compare!

Our unit is very lucky to have developed very good liaison with the laboratory staff and our colleagues in radiology. This has helped to make our patients' journey smoother and less traumatic for all, especially the worried parents.

Into this mix go calls from parents of surgical discharges, who phone to let us know how their youngster is after surgery, calls from tertiary centres requesting blood tests on some of our shared-care patients, parents phoning to change appointments or ask for advice and further information, requests for assistance from other areas within our unit and of course the request for us to see even more patients that day – not to mention using the computer once it's been kick-started.

Our workload is varied and we are very lucky to have an excellent team who swing into action and deal with all requests as quickly as possible. We also have been likened to Sherlock Holmes when we have to try to track down where some of our samples went and what the results were. Our tests can be sent all over the country and it is difficult at times to keep track.

We offer a high-quality service to all our young charges and their parents, at the same time continuing to increase our expertise in developing an ambulatory service of which we can all be proud.