



A day in the life of a District Nurse

Cassie Buckley, of Rotherham, is a recently qualified District Nurse working in the Central North District Nursing Team.

Based in community sites throughout Rotherham, the District Nursing team are responsible for providing care to some of Rotherham's most unwell and often vulnerable residents, in their own homes. She's lifted the lid on what a 'typical' day looks like for her (or not so typical in this case!) and why she loves her job.

We met with Cassie as she started her day at base: "This is where we would typically start our day, looking at the plan for the day and the patients we're seeing, getting dressings and any other equipment we need, before starting our visits."

Cassie's priority in the morning is to see the patients on her essential caseload. Her first patient is diabetic and relies on District Nurses to check her blood glucose levels and administer her insulin. Despite a language barrier making communication a little bit difficult, Cassie clearly has a rapport with her first patient of the day, who loves to ask Cassie if she's engaged yet (there's no ring on her finger

yet but Cassie hopes to bring her good news one day!).

Her next patient also needs blood glucose levels checking and insulin administering. Here we heard how the District Nurses can sometimes be the only people this patient sees in her day. Cassie took the time to explain some of the services available, including social prescribing, and offered to speak to her GP to discuss what kind of support can be offered.

Cassie said: "[As a District Nurse] you're the friendly face. You're the person who walks through the door, who they know they can count on and who they can open up to. Sometimes that's all they need. They need to know that there's someone they can talk to."

It was on Cassie's third visit that her day became not so typical. After changing the dressings of one of her more complex patients, Cassie was waved down by a local resident as she returned to her car.

This gentleman was experiencing symptoms similar to a stroke and called out to Cassie for help. She sprang into action, getting him to a safety and phoning 999 for emergency assistance. Thankfully he started to feel better and Cassie could hand him over to the paramedics knowing he was in safe hands.

It may not have been part of the plan for the day but it's something Cassie has gotten used to, saying: "This sometimes happens as a District Nurse. Because you're in uniform, members of the public will stop you and ask for medical advice. And we have a duty of care [to those people]."

It's into the car and onto Cassie's next patient, Ian. (Continued on Page 5)

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Welcome from the Chairman



Welcome to the latest edition of **Your Health**, where we showcase some of our hospital and community based services. I am delighted to be acting as Chair for the Trust for the next few months.

Our previous Chair of nine years, Martin Havenhand, has been appointed as Chair of Yorkshire Ambulance Service and we wish him the best of luck in the future. Dr Michael Richmond will join the Trust as Chair in the new year.

As a Foundation Trust, the Board is held accountable by our Council of Governors who are elected by Members

of the Trust. Membership provides a valuable opportunity for the people of Rotherham to have a say in their local healthcare services.

Last week, we held our annual members' meeting where we provided a public overview of the previous financial year (April 2022 to March 2023), discussed the challenges we have faced and our priorities for the future. I'd like to thank those of you that attended this year, but if you missed it, a recording is now available on the Trust's website.

Kamran Malik
Acting Chair



Martin Havenhand

A message from our Chief Executive



As we once again head towards the Winter period, we are busy planning ahead to ensure our services are as prepared as possible for what is typically the busiest time of year.

In this edition of Your Health, we'll set out some of our plans for the Winter period and provide some tips on how to stay healthy during the colder months, along with a reminder of the different options there are for healthcare advice across Rotherham.

One of the ways you can help the NHS is to get the flu and Covid-19 booster vaccinations if you are eligible. Although they may not stop you from getting a virus, they reduce the risk of serious illness, and therefore reduce the risk of you needing hospital admission.

The NHS has a diverse workforce, with over 350 careers available. We are always recruiting to a variety of clinical and non-clinical roles in Rotherham Hospital and in the community. In this edition of Your Health we follow a day in the life of one of our district nurses as she visits patients in their own homes. We will be continuing to highlight different roles through our social media pages over the coming months.

You can view our vacancies and apply online by visiting www.jobs.nhs.uk

Dr Richard Jenkins
Chief Executive



You can view our vacancies and apply online by visiting www.jobs.nhs.uk



Improving your experience in hospital

Coming into hospital can sometimes be a scary and upsetting time. That's why, if you find yourself in Rotherham Hospital, we want to make your stay as comfortable as possible.

Our most recent inpatient survey results aren't as good as we would have hoped and highlight some areas for improvement. We've listened to feedback from our patients and are working on ways to make your experience as good as it possibly can be.

Our new bedside information folder, is available by every inpatient bedside and on our website. This explains what to expect as an inpatient.

You Look Your Best When You're Up and Dressed

As part of our Person Centred Care work we encourage patients to keep mobile in hospital to aid their recovery.

We've recently opened a clothes store to help provide clean clothes to patients who may not have visitors and are looking to introduce a hospital hairdresser for patients who miss their regular salon visits.

Staffing

Recruitment and retention has been a big focus for us this year, and we've had huge success with our work to recruit and retain valued nursing, midwifery and healthcare support workers. In fact, we've been recognised as a positive role model for other Trusts thanks to our work in this area.

You may have seen the recent news that we've been shortlisted for a Nursing Times staff wellbeing award for our new staff changing rooms, in response to listening to our teams.

All of this work has resulted in more nursing staff across all clinical areas to provide care for you.

Pain management

Nobody wants to be in pain, and we want to provide appropriate and effective management of symptoms for our patients. We're investing in more education

for clinical staff and supporting them to accurately assess pain so we can make sure that relief is given via the best route for each person. This includes people who are unable to verbally express that they are in pain.

Nutrition and hydration

We focus on making sure patients are eating well and staying hydrated.

Last year, we launched Making Mealtimes Matter, so carers or loved ones who want to help with meals are welcomed as part of the ward team. For some patients it may be difficult to eat a full meal, which is why we've introduced mini-meals and finger foods to our menus.



To make it easier for staff to keep track of how much liquid patients are getting, we've introduced a traffic light system. At the start of the day, each water jug has a red lid, which is switched to amber then green with each top up.

We also host regular inpatient tea-parties to encourage social dining. These often coincide with national events like the Queen's Jubilee or the NHS' 75th birthday.

Involving you in decisions about your care

It's important to involve patients in decisions about their treatment, and we want to make sure that patients and their families are fully informed before making decisions.

This means they are given all the information, such as the risks, the benefits, and any alternative options available.

We have Communication Stations available throughout the hospital to help colleagues connect with patients with varying communication needs. They include resources such as translation and interpreter information, an alphabet chart, picture cards, and hearing aid batteries.

This supports the initiatives and campaigns we've already introduced, including more open, standardised visiting across adult wards; 'sleep helps healing' which promotes a peaceful environment during the night; our pledge to support **John's Campaign**, meaning we welcome carers at all times, to assist patients living with dementia or experiencing delirium; and our **Veteran Aware** accreditation which highlights our commitment to providing the best standards of care to the Armed Forces community.

Helen Dobson, Chief Nurse, believes this is a positive sign that we're heading in the right direction, saying:

"As we continue on our journey to outstanding, it's important that we listen to what patients and their families are telling us."

"The patient experience is the most important feedback we can get as a Trust so we can use this information to continue to improve our care. The improvement work we're undertaking helps us make patients feel at ease and promote recovery and positive wellbeing.

"We are always looking at ways we can improve and we'll continue to listen to, reflect, and act on the feedback we get from our patients."



**2 minutes now could
save up to 9 lives**

Confirm your decision
to be an organ donor.
**It's the best thing
you'll do today.**



Scan the QR code above or
visit organ donation.nhs.uk

Confirm your decision to be an organ donor - it's the best thing you'll do today

Last week was Organ Donation Week and here at the Trust our teams were wearing their brightest pink to raise awareness and pay tribute to past donors.

The Critical Care team hosted a pink themed tea party, and our information stand had everything you would need to know to help you make a decision about becoming a donor, including organ donation law, religious beliefs, and corneal and tissue donation.

On Wednesday, a service was held in the hospital Chapel to pay tribute to those who have given the greatest gift, the gift of life. Loved ones were invited to the chapel as we remembered, celebrated and thanked donors. Poems were read, candles were lit, and messages were added to our memory tree.

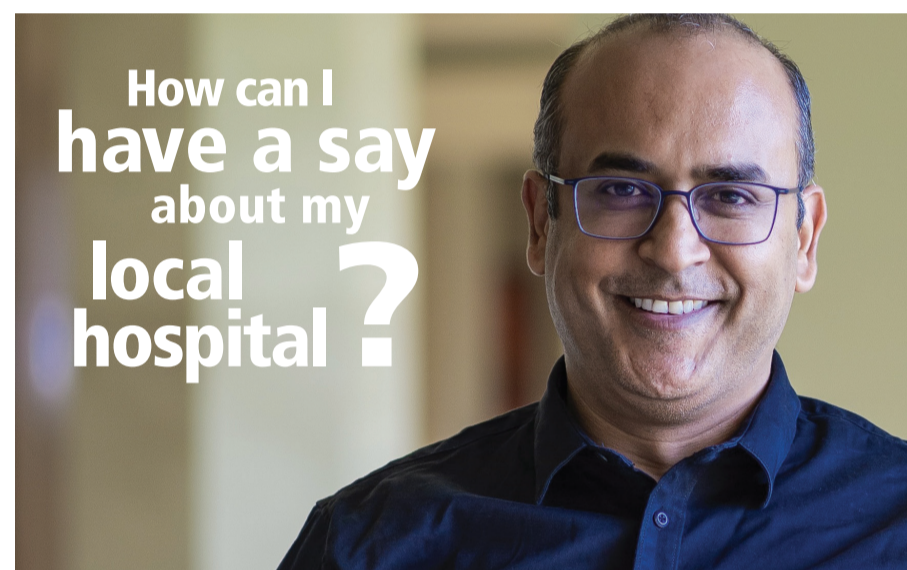
The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust's Clinical Lead for Organ Donation is Critical Care Consultant, Clare Windsor. She encourages everybody to consider organ and tissue donation, and to register their decision.

Clare said: "It takes two minutes to share your decision to donate organs and give

the gift of life to somebody who is waiting on the transplant list. I would also like to say thank you to those who have selflessly donated their organs. Thank you also to their families for supporting their decision."

Organ donation remains your choice and the best way to make your decision known is to record it on the NHS Organ Donor Register. You can amend or withdraw a registration at any time. Families will always be involved before organ donation goes ahead so it's important that you talk with them about your decision.

Every day in the UK, someone dies waiting for an organ transplant, because there just aren't enough organ donors. More than 7000 people need a life-saving transplant right now, but sadly there are only around 1400 organ donors each year. People can receive a transplant from someone of any ethnicity, however the most suitable match is likely to come from a donor of the same ethnicity.



Become a Member

Becoming a member of your local NHS Foundation Trust is a meaningful way to engage with and help shape your local healthcare services.

Members are able to stand as a Governor, vote in Governor elections, attend meetings and influence the direction of healthcare provision provided by The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust. You can help ensure the Trust delivers high-quality healthcare services that meet the needs of the community.

Membership is free, you must be over the age of 16, and you can have as much or as little involvement as you like. To request an application form, email rgf-tr.foundation.trust@nhs.net.

You can find out more about becoming a member on our website: www.therotherhamft.nhs.uk/get-involved



A day in the life of a District Nurse

Continued from cover page.

Ian was initially discharged from hospital on insulin. He felt that with education and support he could manage his diabetes on his own, something nurses actively encourage.

Cassie says: "In the community, we really try to empower patients to self-care and promote independence as much as possible."

In Ian's case, District Nurses would visit him daily, educating him, teaching him about diabetic management, how to administer insulin and check his blood glucose levels, as well as how to treat hypos. In time, Ian became confident enough to manage his own insulin, something Cassie is particularly proud of: "We have a really good rapport with Ian, and he knows that he can call us if he needs us. We're a twenty four hour service so patients can call whenever they need us."

It's this relationship with her patients that makes Cassie's days so special.

"I love being a district nurse. No day is ever the same. You get to know the patient as a whole. You get to know their families and their carers too.

"Together we can make a patient-centred plan and develop a therapeutic relationship. That's something that you don't necessarily get the opportunity to do in other areas. You might get to meet someone once or twice, deal with their acute need and not see them again. That's not the case with district nursing. You get to know them as a person, and I think that's what's really special. You build this bond so you know what's important to

them, and you know you can plan care together.

It's rare that you get that in other places."

Cassie was previously a Community Nurse for four years and found herself taking on more responsibility and seeing more complex patients. She wanted to push herself further and completed a 10 month long Level 7 course to become a specialist district nurse.

Whilst studying, Cassie split her time 50/50 between work and university, and is grateful for the support of those around her, saying: "I am lucky to be part of such an amazing team and to have the support of everyone. I'm so pleased I got to stay in this team once I'd qualified."

Cassie headed back to base in the afternoon for the daily handover, where the team meet to give updates about their patients, raise any concerns and develop care plans.

She also had meetings and calls with social workers, the podiatry team, diabetic service, and community matrons, to follow up on the care of some of her patients.

It was then back out to see more patients on her complex caseload.

Despite it often being just her when she's out on visits, Cassie feels well supported. "I've never felt alone in this job. Though I'm physically on my own when I see patients, I never feel like it's only me out there.

"As a District Nurse, you're an autonomous worker but you've always got somebody on the other end of the phone - colleagues, GPs, 999.

"It helps to develop your management, leadership and assessment skills because you are on your own and you have to make decisions. It's a lot of responsibility but there's always someone you can call."

Thank you to Cassie for letting us tag along for the day, and to her patients who welcomed us into their homes.



If you'd like to see more of Cassie's day, check out our video, 'Day in the Life of a District Nurse' on our Facebook page.



Caring for our colleagues



As one of the largest employers in Rotherham, we want to care for and support our colleagues, particularly in times of need.

That's why we are proud to have been awarded The Smallest Things' Employers with Heart charter mark – the first Trust in the area to achieve this!

This recognises our work to support parents of premature babies.

We believe that parents facing the worry and uncertainty of visiting their

premature baby in hospital should not have to spend that time as maternity or paternity leave. Premature babies need more time; time to develop, time to grow and time for parents and babies to bond at home after neonatal intensive care.

We now offer mothers whose babies are born prematurely an extended maternity leave, from the day baby is born, up until the due date.

Partners also get the time they need to be

with their baby in the hospital, getting two weeks paid special leave.

Catriona Ogilvy, Chair and Founder of The Smallest Things said: "We are thrilled to award The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust with our Employer with Heart charter mark. These changes will mean that The Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust staff will not need to worry about work or money following the birth of a baby born prematurely and will give back precious time to parents to be with their baby or babies once they come home."



Alongside this, we have also signed the Miscarriage Association's Pregnancy Loss Pledge.

We have developed a dedicated policy which supports colleagues with additional time off, during a very difficult time.

As part of this pledge we make sure colleagues feel able to take the time off they need whilst showing empathy and understanding, and supporting people back to work by being responsive to their needs.

We're proud to continue to lead the way in supporting staff. In 2020 we became the first Trust in the area to introduce extra leave for colleagues attending adoption appointments on top of the leave allocated after a successful adoption.



The Pregnancy Loss Pledge ✓

Winter is on its way!

For the past few months, we have been busy making plans for the increased demand expected during winter.

These include assessing capacity and reconfiguring beds, implementing additional support for our discharge teams and working with partners in Rotherham on social care schemes.

Looking after yourself

Keep warm

Staying warm helps prevent colds, flu and more serious health problems like strokes, heart attacks and pneumonia.

Heat your home to a temperature comfortable to you, at least 18 degrees Celsius. GOV.UK offer advice about benefits and financial support for heating your home.

Get vaccinated

It's important to get your seasonal flu and COVID-19 vaccinations if you're at higher risk of getting seriously ill.

Get help from the right place at the right time

If you're feeling unwell, the sooner you get advice, the sooner you're likely to get better.

You can get help and advice from:

A pharmacy – pharmacy can give treatment advice for lots of minor illnesses or let you know if you need to see a doctor.

Your GP – lots of GPs offer telephone or online appointments, as well as face to face.

NHS 111 – use 111.nhs.uk or call 111 if you have an urgent problem and you're not sure what to do.

In an emergency, go to A&E or call 999.

Don't forget to check on vulnerable neighbours and relatives during winter too!

As the weather gets colder, icy pavements and roads can stop people from going out.

Make sure they're stocked up with enough food supplies for a few days, just in case.

If they do need to go out in the cold, encourage them to wear shoes with a good grip and a scarf around the mouth to protect them from cold air, and to reduce their risk of chest infections.



Tiny Toes Appeal

Rotherham's tiniest hospital patients have inspired our new £150,000 fundraising campaign to enhance the experience of parents and their little ones on the Neonatal Unit. We'd love you to get involved!



Help us raise
£150,000

to enhance our Neonatal Unit at Rotherham Hospital

Please visit
[justgiving.com/campaign/tinytoesappeal](https://www.justgiving.com/campaign/tinytoesappeal)
to donate.

TEXT TO DONATE

Text TOES to 70450 to donate £10

Text TOES to 70580 to donate £5

Text TOES to 70460 to donate £3

therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity



Teddy's story

Baby Teddy Taylor almost crashed his parents' wedding when he arrived on 24 June, the day before his mum and dad, Emma and Lee, were due to tie the knot. He was born at 27 weeks and weighed just 770 grams.

Mum Emma said: "At 27 weeks and six days, I had a placenta abruption and by the evening I had to have an emergency section under general anaesthetic.

"Having a premature baby is scary but also rewarding because you get to see your baby grow in the real world and not in your tummy. It was amazing to see him develop – I could see everything grow.

"Teddy was cared for on the Neonatal Unit for six weeks and as with any neonatal journey, there are lots of ups and downs. He suffered viruses, which all premature babies do. We had some rocky times and spent much longer on the ward than we expected but it wouldn't have made our journey if we hadn't had those bumps in the road.

"Staff made sure we felt like parents, were involved in all his care and shared all his milestones. We could feed and change him and bring him home comforts. We felt like a family, which was so important because we didn't get the experience of taking him home and the typical newborn things we'd dreamed of. We were all rooting for him.

"Unless you've had a premature baby experience, I don't think people understand the impact it has on your life. It was life-changing for us but the caring and compassionate support we got from the ward staff made it so much easier.

"Please donate to the Tiny Toes appeal to help babies like Teddy, if you can."



**Rotherham Hospital
& Community Charity**

***If you would like to support our charity,
please get in touch for more information.***

Email: therotherhamft.nhs.uk/charity

Tel: 01709 426821