

Day Surgery

A Day in the Life

A Day in the life of a Deputy Sister at Ashford Hospital

Bright crisp autumnal mornings, I love them...but that low sun does make the drive to work a bit dodgy. Have to drive carefully as I have precious cargo on board to show the girls in Day Surgery Unit my 8 year old daughter's pet snake "Sky's" first skin shedding! Well, on presentation that brought a variant of reactions, woke everyone up!

It is 7:40am, best part of the day – left behind the hectic husband of 2.4 children, didn't wake up grumpy ... decided to leave him sleeping! And 2 cats who have tried to kill me on the stairs by weaving in and out of my feet to get my attention AGAIN. Now peace, the calm before the storm. Coffee and a quick check over the days events before me.

Ascertained staff, lists and equipment so off on the morning "buggy-run" to collect additional equipment required for the day. Greeted by our ever helpful drumming porter who helps complete buggy-run.

T.B, T.B, sounds nasty!? Oh its sister calling its 08:15 so lower suites team brief. Troops are gathered 5 minutes is taken to ensure all areas are covered, equipment available, patient in, any potential problems identified and all are happy. Good sorted, on with the day. As with all good troops we have our alias "upper suite", more commonly known as Main Theatres. Team brief occurs next at 08:30 up there, a lower suite (DSU) person attends, this way we can strive too achieve a united and seamless service between the 2 suites. Wonder who's "gassing" today? Yahoo, here is M Jackson, not the American singer but our very own versionan anaesthetist.

08:45 the calm before the storm is over, not quite Hurricane Katrina proportions, more of a Birmingham mini tornado! Enough to cause pretty rapid movements. Admissions a plenty, pre-op screening service to commence, scopes in the endoscopy "cooker" and plenty of equipment to wash down in theatres. 09:00 battle commences! 'Knife to skin' as we say. Patient on the table prepared, draped and surgery commenced. In endoscopy and treatment room procedures have all begun. Busy, busy but satisfying at the same time. Reassuring to see the end product of what has been an anxious time for the person who has readjusted their lives to attend our unit for the day to rectify the ailment they have been suffering.

In additions to ensuring all is running smoothly on the day I have to find time to check on the coming days activities too. So, in between lists time is equipment, stock and staffing. Time is of the essence and with no two days ever being the same, the days fly by, but it is essential to find the time to ensure we are prepared for the days to follow.

12:45, coffee, sarnie and a quick catch-up with the team- lovely! We have a strong team where a lot of us have worked together for years so it is always nice hearing about whose kids have been achieving well at school, or won a sports event, or first day at school. Last summer we organised a Teddy Bears picnic at a local park, it was great to see all of our children playing together... not too mention which one of us "big kids" could skip the longest!

13:30, and off we go again. The afternoon theatre and endoscopy sessions commence. On the ward the team are extremely busy with post operative care and admissions for preparation of preoperative/procedure patient. Were possible we "juggle" staff to help at this time a rotational programme on the unit aids in this process and everyone can have both empathy and understanding of each persons role, this area has finished the staff divide and conquer! They may go into another area or on to the ward, or do the evening "buggy-run" to prepare for the next days sessions preparation is the key, teamwork is essential.

17:30, quick log on, check out the e-mails as we do receive several revisions to lists and this channel of communication is both essential and valuable. We close down all the areas, ensuring everywhere is secure. My last task prior to leaving, I always check that all is well on the ward. Thankfully all is good so it's off to the changing room and get out of my PJ's (blue scrubs) and back into my civvies.

Pit stop at Tesco's, got to make sure the cats have food and off home to face the last session of the day... doing homework with the kids!