“I rely on the nurses coming. I call them the angels. They are the only ones who give comfort – they help my wife and make her feel better.”

“During the course of one day I can be praised or insulted, help someone to lead a better life or help someone to die a dignified death.”

“I felt very privileged to then be welcomed by the extended family and listened to how they described the patient’s last hours and the precious time they had together.”

National Nurses’ Day
12 May 2014
A day in the life of community nursing in Solent NHS Trust
Acknowledgements
Thank you to all the community nursing staff from Solent NHS Trust for joining in the spirit of National Nurses’ Day and writing about their experiences. Thank you to those staff and patients who agreed to be photographed and for the support from the Marketing Communications Team, especially Emilia Chase.

Introduction
National Nurses’ Day is celebrated every year around the 12 May to commemorate the birth anniversary of Florence Nightingale and to mark nurses’ contributions towards people’s health.

The idea of celebrating community nursing in Solent NHS Trust was greeted with a tremendous degree of enthusiasm; the amount of responses received made it a great pleasure to do.

I met up with team members and asked if nurses would write something about their day. Each staff member was given a letter with a response form on the back. Some staff have chosen to remain anonymous; others have been happy to be quoted.

The responses show just how much our staff love their job. There is a great deal of frustration at times with tasks and procedures which are out of their control, but the care they give to patients, families and support for each other shines through the words which have been written.

Every response received has been included as, once I had read them, each one became too interesting to leave out! The words written go through the 12 May from 8.00am in the morning until the out of hours staff finished their shift.

I hope you enjoy reading about a day in the life of Solent NHS Trust community nurses as much as I have.

Sue Hill
Service Transformation Manager
In the morning . . . .

All my patients were straightforward today, so I had the opportunity to spend a little bit longer with my patients and look through and update notes. I was able to spend time washing a patient’s legs, for which she was very grateful. I have felt much supported following recent tragic events within our unit. Everyone in the team is caring and kind to each other.

Julie Sizer
Senior Staff Nurse - Thomas Parr House

I took a new healthcare support worker to visit yellow team’s patients and to observe sterile techniques for wound care and how to read care plan. A good day - not rushed.

Karen Davy
Healthcare Support Worker - Thomas Parr House

I spent an hour helping with messages and jobs that needed doing before I saw a patient.

Community Staff Nurse

I am attending a band 3 forum today. We will be given ECG training today. The forum is useful to band 3s, we can suggest items we would like spoken about, what we would like teaching for and more.

Mary Bowyer
Community Support Worker - Thorold Road

I had a new patient referral today. This patient did not have a very good experience in hospital. During spinal surgery some damage was done to airways and vocal chords, leaving the patient with breathing difficulties. The patient had a poor discharge and had to self-refer to the district nursing for her dressing to be changed. The patient was not feeling very positive about the treatment she received, but the district nurse visit went well and she said she was happy with the care she received from hospital and community nurses.

Community Staff Nurse

Today has been an extra busy day, but with the support of a fantastic team, all patients have been seen, supported and reassured.

Community Staff Nurse
West End Road / Chessel

Today I was able to see a patient in their own home, order their medication and request a district nurse visit so that the patient did not have to travel to the GP surgery. He is on oxygen and finds it difficult to get in/out of a car. I also supported the wife by requesting a carer’s assessment; she is finding everything a bit of a strain. I ordered a wheelchair and did a full medical assessment. The patient and his wife were really grateful that I was able to co-ordinate all aspect of care without them having to leave their house!! – Very satisfying.

Julie Harding
Community Matron – Herbert Collins House
I arrived at the surgery at 8.20am, collected a list of work and equipment to take to patients, delayed in traffic driving to the first visit.

From my list I was aware that I needed to perform dressings. The patient wasn’t aware of where his dressings or notes were. Fortunately I had brought some dressings with me, but I didn’t have a laptop to look anything up. Departed leaving the 92 year old comfortable.

A text to request a late morning visit from another patient, then driving on to a 95 year old living alone who was able to answer the door and let me in, I had a message to phone her neighbour who was struggling to support the patient with several visits a day, but felt guilty in asking for help. Following consent and discussion it was agreed to refer the patient to Social Services. I then performed the leg dressings required.

I then called in to another surgery to collect some dressings for the visit. This patient’s son was present when I arrived, which is not usual. The son was calling/speaking to the emergency services as his parent was stuck on the toilet. Fortunately I was able to diffuse the situation/emergency by assisting the patient and son.

I then needed to perform the two leg dressings (complex), plus a request from GP to visit as there was deterioration in the patient’s mobility. I departed leaving the son with his elderly parent.

My last visit was a routine surgical post-operative procedure and fortunately there were no problems. By now it was raining as I drove back to the surgery to hand over my morning work and access the computer where I could complete my visits on to System One. I left the surgery after completing my shift at 13.50.

Community Bank Staff Nurse

Today I have renewed Ambulance Anticipatory Care Plan of two local rest homes to ensure patient’s wishes are known – best practice continues and sharing information with other agencies.

Community Sister
I had a varied day - being new to the team I met the other team members for the first time, who were very welcoming and friendly. I then met with a family who I had been working with, and I am really glad that all the hard work, time and even feeling out of my comfort zone, made such a difference to them. This made me go home feeling very appreciated and loving my new job.

Charlene Martin
Community Matron – Central Community Team

Today has been a day, I have seen seven patients this morning, some did not have dressings, but I managed with what I had. I feel extremely lucky this week to work with such supportive staff as we are all pulling together after receiving sad news last week.

Danielle Cole
Community Staff Nurse Band 5 – Thomas Parr House, Cosham

Today has highlighted how important our role is as advocate. Supporting families and the patient in having the right to choose where to spend their final days, despite doctors trying to admit patients.

Community Sister -
West End Road / Chessel

Today has been an enjoyable, although slightly frustrating day due to two members of staff turning up to do the same patient! It is always good to go home every day knowing that you have made a difference to someone’s day and helped them in some way, especially those that are lonely and rely on you for some company. Working in the community is a job I would recommend.

Health Care Assistant
West End Road / Chessel

Leaving a patient’s home knowing you have done everything in your power to keep the patient safe and comfortable.

Tina Vincent
Clinical Manager – Bitterne Park Medical Centre

Working as a community nurse has its frustrations when dressings aren’t supplied and you have to improvise on the treatment you give. Constantly having to chase the GP surgery and pharmacy to sort supplies out. It is frustrating as you know treatment times will take longer as the patient is not having the most appropriate dressing. However, when things go right and you see wounds healing, it is very satisfying. I enjoy making a difference to people’s life and the rapport and trust that is built.

Community Staff Nurse

Visiting a lovely lady who didn’t need a visit in the end, but shared her stories of when she was a dancer with her husband – who is no longer here, and said how much she enjoyed my visit.

Luisa Sherman
Health Care Support Nurse – St Mary’s

Interesting day visiting patients with different needs accompanied by a student nurse, supervising her with dressing techniques and explaining why different dressings are used, applied to different wounds. All patients very friendly and thankful for all the care received. One patient was concerned that she had not received dressings that had been ordered. The student nurse followed this up and was able to deliver the dressings to the patient – the patient was very happy with this.

Suzanne Whitaker
Staff Nurse – Belmont Road
The two o’clock news

Nursing “saints” of Southampton

What can I say? – 12 May - A perfect day. I’ve cured the ill and Luke, Adam and Rickie are off to BRAZIL.

Community Nursing Bank

Had to take some tiny stitches out from an eyebrow skin graft, but as they were tight was unable to grip them properly with the plastic tweezers. Need to obtain metal tweezers – may have to raid the make-up bag!

Alison Semadeni
Community Staff Nurse – Thomas Parr House

I did my first intra-muscular injection today! :-(

Emma Lane
Student Nurse – Thomas Parr House

Quote from patient:
“I’m so glad you have come to visit me today. I don’t feel very well.”

Our patients rely on us and our care towards them. Without community health staff, many of our patients would be so much worse and forever in and out of hospital.

Community Support Worker

I enjoy that no day is the same. We are very privileged to be able to care for patients in their home, which enables me to give a complete holistic approach in the care we deliver. We can meet daily challenges which can stretch our skill both clinically and emotionally. Having a good relationship with the people I visit enables me to challenge behaviours and provide good health promotion guidelines for them to follow.

Community Staff Nurse

I like to be able to complete all my allocated visits and associated tasks. To help solve any problems that patients present with. To chat and empathise with those patients. I feel that I have done that today despite the daily pressures of paperwork, audits and telephone!

Sara Snow (Sally),
Community Staff Nurse - Cheviot Road District Nurse Team

Today I managed to complete my outstanding tasks from last week.

Hannah
Admin - Thomas Parr House

Today I interviewed two excellent nurses who were keen and enthusiastic about community nursing – sadly I also interviewed two nurses who didn’t know anything about the Francis Report or the Mid Staffordshire hospital report.

Lisa Beard
Clinical Manager - Overton
I went to a patient who had not had her dressing changed on time due to breakdown in communication between care providers. Dressings were sopping wet with exudate. I changed the dressings, washed and creamed legs – a simple nursing task but the patient was so grateful and thankful for me doing this. It has reminded me of why I wanted to be a nurse and how something that is perceived as ‘basic’ nursing care, compared to the numerous amounts of paperwork and ‘expanding’ roles of nurses can be so invaluable to patients – strip back nursing to basics, take away unnecessary titles and targets that move good nurses away from their patients.

Marie Gibbs
Community Staff Nurse – Burgess Road

I have recently returned to the community after a career break to spend time with my children. I am proud to call myself a community nurse; I feel that I make a real difference to our patients’ lives in a positive way. I enjoy the variety of my job, from caring for individuals in the last days of their life, to simple and complex wound care, continence care, support and advice to patients and carers, working within the multi-disciplinary team and teaching students. Every day is different!

Sam Haynes
Community Staff Nurse – Burgess Road

I made an introductory visit to a patient who has recently been diagnosed with Mesothelioma. I enjoy the challenge of the first visit to a client’s home, starting to build a relationship with the patient and their family – introducing our service and representing the NHS.

Ingrid Allen
Community Sister - Royal South Hants Hospital

I helped and supported my team members today, but was unable to complete my requested daily tasks as a result.

Health Care Support Worker

Participated in Nurse’s Day event at a local supermarket. We promoted the good service that community nurses provide across the city. I gained a lot of satisfaction out of helping a young lady who was a full time carer to both her parents. Her dad had recently had heart surgery; her mum had had a stroke and was nursed in bed. Information on support services available as well as information on pressure ulcer prevention was given and very much appreciated as she had not had any input from Health and Social Services.

Concessa Boshein
District Nurse Student – Overton Centre

Today I carried out my first visit independently, managing my own caseload and having to make my own judgement and skills. I felt more confident in my decisions. I redressed all wounds and re-bandaged with no other concerns. Patient was very chatty and well today.

Hannah Brady
Student Nurse – Royal South Hants Central
This morning we went to visit patient X to clean and dress the wound on her left foot. Patient X is incredibly friendly and happy to chat away while dressing. The wound was extremely malodorous and a moderate amount of haemoprulent exudate had leaked through to the outer dressing. We cleaned the wound and redressed her leg as per her care plan.

We then went to visit patient Y to do a Doppler reassessment. Most of the results were monophasic and dull. Apart from the left dorsalis pedis, we couldn’t occlude any other results. Patient Y’s legs were both intact and well hydrated but remained oedematous.

Last visit of the morning was to patient W, who needed his wounds cleaned and redressed. We swabbed all three wounds and took his temperature. We trialled a new dressing, Aquacel foam, because patient W had complained of pain and discomfort; the wounds were all cleaned and dressed as per care plan.

Clarice Adams
Student Nurse – Royal South Hants

I started the day with a Monday morning catch-up, a brief meeting with senior staff to forward plan for the week and reflect on staffing issues over the last week and coming week. As the duty nurse and phone holder for the day, it was my job to triage calls and prioritise same day visits. A rewarding busy day giving me an opportunity to respond promptly to patient needs in real time.

For instance a patient was able to make a direct referral to our service by phone expressing his concerns with regards to his long term urinary catheter not working properly and causing him discomfort.

I was firstly able to reassure on the phone and then followed up with a face to face visit, where I was able to successfully resolve his problem with the catheter, thus helping to prevent further distress and even avoid hospital admission. A job well worth doing and making a real difference to the patient.

Chris Lee
Sister – Royal South Hants Central
Irene was in a low mood when I arrived. She was worried that her heel was broken again. After examination, I reassured her that her heel had healed beautifully. As she believes in the self-healing process, I tried to engage in a conversation and had a discussion about self-healing which she enjoyed talking about, therefore boosting her mood.

Community Staff Nurse

My day started at 8, I went to a patient early because she needed to go to the day centre at 9. She was a bit low in mood, I told her a funny story about my grandchildren over the weekend – she was laughing when I left, she said that I was a tonic! During the course of one day I can be praised or insulted, help someone to lead a better life or help someone to die a dignified death. I can quickly rush from one visit to another or spend all day in the office sorting out paperwork and emails – I know which I prefer! I spend a lot of time with my colleagues; we get on well and support each other. We need to. At times we struggle to cope without enough staff. We also have a good working relationship with our GPs and receptionists. My day ended with a visit to a patient whose home smells of cigarettes so badly that you go straight home for a shower!

Jackie Wilds
Community Sister – Woolston Lodge Surgery
I have had a busy but nice day at work today, maybe the sunshine has helped! But all of my patients have been happy today. My only frustration today has been the chemist; they have been very slow with delivery of dressings etc. lately. I arrived at a patient’s expecting their dressings would have arrived but they hadn’t and as a result I had to improvise with the dressings that I had.

Charlotte Lambert
Community Sister – Lordshill Health Centre

Today I have renewed Ambulance Anticipatory Care Plan of two local rest homes to ensure patient’s wishes are known – best practice continues and sharing information with other agencies.

Community Sister

No two days on community nursing are ever the same, but every day is a challenge. My day is mostly rewarding and my patients are happy to see me. I feel my day is always worthwhile and rewarding and I thoroughly enjoy it.

Michelle Noton
Community Staff Nurse – Lordshill
I really enjoyed taking Sue Hill out to meet a couple of my patients. I was really inspired by Sue and am looking forward to trying out some of her transformational ideas to further improve our patient care and safety.

Heather Davy
Community Matron – Thomas Parr House

Today I had to do an unannounced safeguarding visit in preparation for a case conference. I find this quite difficult as a professional, as you can see staff making efforts to improve practice but under pressure of people like myself within a safeguarding of vulnerable people role. I met my co-managers to look at bank nurses and requests for shift cover – very time consuming! I then had a weekly meeting with band 7 and 6s trying to be positive in the face of adversity and embracing changes!

Shona Anderson
Clinical Manager – Thomas Parr House

Spent time in Asda, Fratton celebrating our role as community nurses, informing shoppers of the many jobs we do in the community.

Tracy McGarvey
Associate Practitioner – Thomas Parr House
Attended a study session on new Parkinson’s treatment and device for administering this to promote patient’s management and condition leading to a more controlled condition and improvement. As a nurse it is interesting to be part of this new development and promote patient health and new technology.

RGN Band 5 – Grove Road

I rely on the nurses coming. I call them the angels. They are the only ones who give comfort – they help my wife and make her feel better.

Quote from a patient’s husband

Pleased to note improvement in a couple of patients’ wounds.

Jossi
Staff Nurse – Overton

Visiting a lovely lady who didn’t need a visit in the end, but shared her stories of when she was a dancer with her husband – who is no longer here, and said how much she enjoyed my visit.

Luisa Sherman
Health Care Support Nurse – St Mary’s

Today I spent thirty minutes chasing up an outpatient appointment, organising transport and contacting their previous ward for essential information for us to deliver the best and appropriate care, all of which should have been organised and supplied to the patient before discharge. This took away valuable time from the patients.

Community Staff Nurse

A very busy day. It’s a job I enjoy, but the paperwork just gets you down. I became a nurse because I consider myself a people person, but all I seem to do now is rush here and there chasing my tail. It is becoming the norm and is very sad as we are losing time with patients; care is being rushed.

Marisa Mason
Community Staff Nurse - Lordshill

At first I visited a patient in a bad mood because he wanted a cigarette, he told me to “f” off and when I asked him if he wanted me to go, he said that I could do what I “f***ing” want. Visited eight other patients and then had to go to St Mary’s for Multi-Disciplinary Team discharge meeting. Rushed back to Health Centre to attend Gold Standards Framework meeting. This afternoon I am duty nurse, so I am liaising with patients/nurses/GPs/anyone!

Kate Ardern
Senior Community Staff Nurse - Thomas Parr House

Today (Monday) is a very good day so far, as we (team) have adequate staff. I am able to do my job properly and provide quality care as I’m not in a hurry.

Jose Dignomo
Community Nurse - Lordshill

Today (Monday) is a very good day so far, as we (team) have adequate staff. I am able to do my job properly and provide quality care as I’m not in a hurry.

Jose Dignomo
Community Nurse - Lordshill
Visiting a family whose relative had passed away the evening before – a palliative patient whose death was peaceful and seen as a good experience by them all. They all expressed their thanks and appreciation to the community nursing team for everything they had done in supporting them and caring for their relative. I felt very privileged to then be welcomed by the extended family and listened to how they described the patient’s last hours and the precious time they had together. I felt encouraged by our teamwork and how we all worked together with the family who enabled the patient to die at home.

M Anstis
Clinical Manager – Victor Street

The real sense of achievement that comes from helping organise and co-ordinate care of a palliative patient who needs your help but is afraid/anxious to ask. Coupled with frustrations of low staffing, increased caseload and poor communication it certainly makes for an interesting day!

Patient very happy her leg has healed! Now back in her stockings. She says my team are wonderful… Happy Days x

Heath Care Assistant

Mr Michael (pseudonym) went back home from hospital with catheter insertion but without a supply of urine bags or straps. Mr Michael was unable to call so his wife placed a call on Friday afternoon to the district nurses and asked if they were able to supply any urinary catheter supplies (Mr Michael should have received a weekly supply from hospital). All the necessary supplies were delivered by the district nurse the same day. This quick delivery eased Mr Michael’s wife’s worries and left Mr Michael in a more comfortable situation.

Student Nurse

I spend a good deal of my day retrieving messages from NHS.net and passing them on to the district nurse team. I feel satisfied when I can facilitate these messages and contribute towards the wellbeing of patients – even if in a small way.

Jan Lethbridge
Admin Assistant – Lake Road Health Centre

The day I had on National Nurses’ Day pretty much sums up what I like about being a community nurse. I managed to see and speak to patients, review wounds, problem solve, negotiate with awkward patients and not get stressed – still didn’t manage to do any RIO but I had a lunch break and time for a laugh with my colleagues, oh and finish on time….. sort of!

Uncredited

"I spent a good deal of my day retrieving messages from NHS.net and passing them on to the district nurse team. I feel satisfied when I can facilitate these messages and contribute towards the wellbeing of patients – even if in a small way." -- Jan Lethbridge, Admin Assistant – Lake Road Health Centre

"Visiting a family whose relative had passed away the evening before – a palliative patient whose death was peaceful and seen as a good experience by them all. They all expressed their thanks and appreciation to the community nursing team for everything they had done in supporting them and caring for their relative. I felt very privileged to then be welcomed by the extended family and listened to how they described the patient’s last hours and the precious time they had together. I felt encouraged by our teamwork and how we all worked together with the family who enabled the patient to die at home." -- M Anstis, Clinical Manager – Victor Street

"The real sense of achievement that comes from helping organise and co-ordinate care of a palliative patient who needs your help but is afraid/anxious to ask. Coupled with frustrations of low staffing, increased caseload and poor communication it certainly makes for an interesting day!" -- M Anstis, Clinical Manager – Victor Street

"Patient very happy her leg has healed! Now back in her stockings. She says my team are wonderful… Happy Days x" -- Heath Care Assistant
And in the evening…….

I have been the insulin queen until 8pm this evening. It always makes me laugh when they say thank you after you have done a finger prick and then insulin. Double needle every visit.

Alison Watson
Nursing Auxiliary – Out Of Hours St Mary’s

I walked up seven flights of stairs to attend a patient – who was extremely grateful.

Caroline McIntosh
Community Staff Nurse – Out of Hours

A patient was happy that I visited to change her dressings as she hadn’t been expecting anyone.

Sarah
Nursing Auxiliary – 3rd Floor St Mary’s Hospital

Meeting a lovely family who really value the care given to their dad, who is palliative.

Heather Birch
Health Care Support Worker – Out of Hours

Great shift, nice to be back working with Community Registered Nurse Holloway as I have not worked with her for some time. After two weeks off, nice to see that our regular patients are still well, it was great to see them all again.

Pauline Grillo
Health Care Support Worker – Out of Hours, St Mary’s

Good shift – great team!

Sue Field
Community Staff Nurse – Out of Hours
Some general thoughts from our staff

- The frustration of providing care for patients in distress physically, mentally and socially in multi-disciplinary situation and the time frame or sense of urgency from other statutory and volunteer agencies. The sense of satisfaction when you can see agencies beginning to work together for the patient in need to improve his health and wellbeing in all aspects.

- The importance of having next of kin or alternative key holders or key safe for individuals living alone. Sense of physical relief that the patient is alive but a feeling of silliness that the police just pushed the door and opened it even though I rang and banged on the door, made a phone call and knocked the window. Relief at telling the relatives that all was okay. Now in negotiation to have a key safe to avert issues in the future.

- Frustration that care agency may pull out because of behaviour of relatives in a complex continuing care package.

I woke up in a positive frame of mind determined to celebrate National Nurses’ Day with my team. I had looked for some old photos to bring in and share with staff. The pace of nursing today leaves little space to reflect on our unique role with our patients. When I look at my picture wearing a smart ward sister’s dress, buckle and starched hat I realised that since nurses changed their uniform, a sense of identity has also been lost. I was proud to polish my buckle and wear my hospital badge. Patients and families seemed to respect nurses back then and maybe not so much now. On the way to work I bought cake for the staff with napkins and a tablecloth to make the day special. It would be nice to think we celebrated every year.

Angela Adams
Clinical Manager - Royal South Hants

And finally…………..

I would just like to share this thank you card I received today from a patient’s family. Well and truly makes me realise why I do my job and enjoy it….. Most of the time……..

Dear Paula,

Words can’t really describe how much we appreciated your care and support in the final week of Ken’s life, always there if we needed you for support and comfort.

Even after Ken passed away the care you took over him, talking to him and washing him was lovely and made us feel so much better.

We just wanted to let you know that you do an amazing job.

Love…..

Paula Worthington
Staff Nurse - Cheviot Road