



Karen Orr

Interim Lead Nurse
for Acute Paediatrics

What made you decide to come into nursing/midwifery?

I attended Queen's University Belfast straight out of school to read music but was very unsettled. I then took a year out and during that time worked in a nursing home, this is what made me consider nursing. I love helping and trying to 'fix' people as most nurses would testify to also!

What does your role entail?

Before this interim role I was a sister in Paediatric Outpatients and Short Stay Assessment Unit. As well as managing these 2 areas I also worked clinically caring for children & young people and their families from birth to 16 years old. We would see conditions such as asthma, gastroenteritis, epilepsy, bronchiolitis and feeding issues to name but a few.

In this role I am the lead for acute paediatrics co-ordinating services across the children's unit and helping facilitate a high standard of nursing care.

What does a typical day look like?

Typically, I begin my day by phoning each of the children's wards and the Neonatal Unit to ask about patient numbers and staff availability throughout the day and to ascertain if there are any pressing issues. I then attend a virtual incident control room to hear about pressures throughout the hospitals. After a cup of tea, I walk through each clinical area to check in with staff and ensure that I am visible. The rest of the day could be taken up with a mix of meetings, staff appraisals, answering complaints, disseminating information, reviewing policies, answering e-mails and some clinical work when required.

What advice would you give someone coming into nursing?

Firstly, I would say that nursing is one of the most fulfilling careers. It has become so diverse with many wonderful opportunities. I always tell my staff that they should never chase a band but try to decide on whether they want to remain clinical and perhaps go down the Specialist Nurse or Advanced Nurse Practitioner route or perhaps prefer a more managerial, educational or research role.

I always emphasise that the bedrock of any nursing role is kindness.

Anything else you would like to add?

Nursing has changed and evolved so much over the years but the necessary qualities of compassion and caring are as important today as they ever were.