

# A day in the life – Ward HCA



## Arriving at work

I arrive at work just a little before my shift starts so I can be ready to start promptly. I join the daily safety brief. The nurse in charge shares important updates about the patients on the ward and I'm allocated a group of around seven patients to look after for my shift. I make a note of any appointments/ tests or procedures the patients may have and make a plan so that I can be sure they are ready for these and I can be available to assist them if needed.



## The daily routine

At the beginning of every shift I'll introduce myself and say hello to patients with a smile. The first part of the day shift is usually spent helping patients to the toilet and helping with their morning self-care, such as washing and dressing. This can be different for each patient depending on how much mobility they have. Myself and other HCAs will often ask each other or the registered nurses for help when we are caring for patients with limited mobility. Team working is really important on our ward.



## Call bells and comfort rounds

Throughout the day I regularly go round each patient and ask if they need anything. We call this a 'comfort round'. At the same time I monitor each patient, complete their daily observations (for example take blood pressures and temperatures) and keep each patient's notes up to date. I'll also be listening out for and promptly attending to call bells. All HCAs work together to answer call bells – we don't only respond to our allocated patients.

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## Meal-times

When meals arrive, I serve patients from the food trolley. I make sure I assist patients who need help eating and drinking. I then continue with my comfort rounds and answer call bells. The whole time I talk to patients to make them feel cared for and respected as an individual. I do get a break on my shift, which I take in the staff room. Sometimes there are also nursing colleagues in there so we chat and eat. When I go back to the ward I get an updated safety brief from the nurse in charge.

## Helping relatives and staff

When visiting hours start I often answer the questions I can from relatives or carers. When I can't answer the questions I find help from someone who can, possibly the patient's named nurse. Sometimes I have to assist patients in sessions with the Occupational Therapist. I enjoy working alongside different members of the multidisciplinary team. Often I get beds ready for new admissions and help the nurses settle new patients in and complete their paperwork.

## Responding to patients

As the shift continues, I take round drinks. At the same time, I'm listening out for and attending to call bells. There is always someone I can help. As a shift draws to an end, I'm often tired but proud that I have made a difference to so many people in my work.

# A day in the life – out-patient HCA



## Arriving at work

I arrive at work just a little before 7.30am ready to start my shift promptly. I familiarise myself with the staff working that day and look at the appointments in the daily plan. Typically I then clean the sluices and check all the patients' notes to make sure we have up-to-date paperwork for all the patients coming to clinic and all the right paperwork for each of the procedures they will be having. If anything is missing I start to sort this out immediately.

## Meeting patients

One by one, I meet each patient in the waiting area. I introduce myself and explain what will happen next. I also go through a set of questions with them, and record their answers accurately. I ask if they have any questions they would like to ask me – I try to put everyone at ease and help patients feel confident about their procedure. If they are a day-case patient I will help complete their admission paperwork for the day.

## Preparing patients

Once the patients are admitted or checked-in, its my job to take them to the preparation room. I've been trained in routine medical observations so I carry these out and record the results. I tell a nurse if I have concerns about any patient being too unwell for treatment. I'll then help the patients get ready for their procedures. If they are having an operation, I help patients dress in a gown and store their clothes safely.

# A day in the life – out-patient HCA



## Managing different tasks

During a typical day I also answer the phone several times, answer patient, relative and/or carer queries and help patients who have limited mobility or sight go to the toilet. I also care for patients who have finished their procedures. I make them a cup of tea and make them comfortable while I call their carer to pick them up. On an average day, I can be looking after up to 15 patients each morning and 15 each afternoon so it's very busy and keeping calm and organised is important.

## Tasks around the hospital

I get a break of 30-minutes which I typically take in the staff room and chat with other members of my team. The team works well together and I feel very supported by the nurses. In the afternoons, one of my tasks is to collect drugs from the pharmacy and take samples to the labs. I also sometimes help the wards by taking patients who are having procedures in main theatres and pick them up again. I like these aspects of my role because I enjoy seeing different parts of the hospital.

## Preparing for tomorrow

Towards the end of my shift I check the store room for supplies and order and re-stock any that are low. I also prepare the notes for the next day, check that all the paperwork from the day is filed into the correct notes and look up where the notes need to be sent to next and send them. I then clean up. Once all the patients have gone home I leave at around 6pm. It is a busy day but very varied and rewarding.