

# ‘I enjoy the challenge of treating patients with special care needs’



**Kerry Wafer, 36**, is a specialist dental nurse with the Special Care Dental Service at Birmingham Community HealthCare NHS Foundation Trust.

**I** get up at 6 am. I live with my husband and our nine-year-old twins Ruby and Lewis in Wolverhampton - my home town. I drive to work which is 20 miles away and drink coffee on the way!

I work full time Monday to Friday, from 8:45 am to 5 pm. My job is 50/50 clinical/admin duties. The admin side includes: promotion of the service, audit, general patient admin, arranging clinics, observing specialty training registrars (StRs) and planning teaching sessions for internal and external teams. My clinical duties involve assessment sessions with the consultant, clinical screening sessions in mental health secure units, sedation sessions, and arranging and sitting in with teams for best interest meetings to work out a plan for the treatment of patients who may lack capacity.

I enjoy the patient management side of my

role and the challenge of treating patients with special care needs, as well as the responsibility of leading in new projects and initiating change within the service.

The most challenging part of my role is the journey to work!

There are too many people to count working across the whole service but within the special care team we have two consultants, four senior dental officers, two StRs, several dental officers and numerous nurses who work across special care and paediatrics.

When I get chance I normally eat lunch with my colleagues - a home prepared sandwich or salad - often this may be at my desk.

Twice a year we run a special care study circle which is open to colleagues who are working in neighbouring trusts within special care. Our service also holds twice-yearly whole team training days with themes around special care conditions. We are also supported fairly to apply for funding for training and CPD and encouraged to add to our portfolios.

I get home at 6 pm and spend as much

time with my family as I can. My son Lewis has Asperger's so lots of time has been spent getting a diagnosis and supporting things to help him manage his day to day challenges.

Lewis plays football three times a week and my daughter Ruby is in a gymnastics team training four times a week, so for now most of our time is spent juggling getting to sessions!

I don't have a lot of time for other activities. This year we hope to completely renovate our house following an extension last year, and are planning a dream holiday trip to Florida.

I carefully meal plan for the family for the week ahead to ensure we don't waste food and to save time by preparing meals in advance. It's important to us that the children can still eat healthily despite having to rush to get to training sessions.

If I hadn't gone into dentistry I would probably have chosen general nursing or teaching, as clinical education has always been a passion of mine.

I am in bed by 10:30-11 pm.

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