

A DAY IN THE LIFE: LOUISE VARNS

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Publish Date:

December 2023 | 5 minutes

Abstract:

Welcome to the latest post in our 'Day in the Life' series, where each quarter we introduce a member of the Abbott team. In this article, we meet Louise Varns, Abbott's Hospital2Home Operations Advisor. Louise discusses what a typical day looks like for her, as well as what she is most passionate about both inside and outside of work.

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Tell us a little bit about you and your career with Abbott so far

Before joining Abbott, I worked in a similar contact centre role for NHS 111, so I've always had a background in healthcare and, specifically, working with the NHS.

About nine years ago, I started at Abbott as a contractor in a coordinator role, where I spent the first five years of my time here. During this period, I had my son, so I have done a mixture of part- and full-time work. About four years ago, I transitioned to a permanent position and after being seconded into operations I was successful in obtaining the role as Operations Advisor in April 2023.

I've stayed within the nutrition side of the business at Abbott, and I genuinely enjoy the challenges it brings. Working in healthcare and alongside the NHS can be demanding, but I find it rewarding. I appreciate being involved in operational decision-making, drawing on my experience as a coordinator. It's been quite a journey, and I'm content with where I am now.

Tell us a bit more about your role as Hospital2Home Operations Advisor

I'm one of three Hospital2Home Operations Advisors. In this role, we handle various aspects of the operational side of the business, from IT support to assisting with systems queries. We also work on performance reporting and business improvement plans. Each team member is also responsible for managing specific projects that aim to improve the operational efficiency of H2H. My current focus is to increase the number of nursing homes using our Hospital2Home website so they can place orders online rather than over the phone. The online service helps make our processes more efficient and benefits healthcare professionals (HCPs) by making it much easier to place and track orders and review their patients' histories. We have made good progress on this so far but we will continue to work on this for the foreseeable future.

My experience as a Hospital2Home coordinator really helps me in this role as I understand the challenges the coordinators face, the systems they are using and the kinds of reporting they require. This ensures I can get things done for them quickly, especially if a problem needs troubleshooting.

In addition to the support we offer the Hospital2Home coordinators, we also work closely with Abbott Contract Managers, supporting them with queries and issues, attending contract review meetings, providing them with reports and presentations and helping them implement changes to their contract areas as and when required.

So, it is a varied role, but it keeps me on my toes and helps with my professional development – I'm always learning something new!

What does a typical day look like for you?

I start at half past eight in the morning and work part-time. Each week, we rotate our work streams within the operations team, so often, my days can be pretty varied. I usually begin my day by checking my current work stream and running any required reports in the morning. I also spend a lot of my day dealing with emails in our inbox, which come from various stakeholders, usually within Abbott but sometimes from external HCPs. We also manage aspects of the Hospital2Home website, including registration, account creation, and ensuring nursing homes' accounts are set up correctly. And then, as and when needed, we will assist the Hospital2Home coordinators if things are really busy, so sometimes I help on the phone lines, which is where my coordinator experience comes in handy!

I'll usually spend the rest of my time helping Abbott Contract Managers prepare for their quarterly review meetings, working on any systems tweaks needed and helping resolve any systems issues or problems the rest of the team might face. There's always a lot to do, and it is often all systems go. Still, I find it rewarding to support the rest of the team and ensure that no matter the challenges we face, we always find an outcome so we can continue to deliver an excellent service for NHS organisations and their patients.

What impact does your role have on the wider business?

We have a significant internal impact because we assist coordinators and handle various issues, such as IT and system problems, even if they aren't directly related to our team. Resolving these problems quickly is crucial because it affects our HCPs' and their patients' access to our services. Without coordinators getting the support they need, there could be issues with logins, website problems, and patients not receiving deliveries. It's a high-pressured and challenging role, but we work together as one massive team and help each other out where we can, and it is rewarding to see the positive impact we have on the rest of the team.

What is the impact of your role on patients and trusts?

Our role helps provide clear communication between our department and NHS organisations at all times. We help NHS organisations understand our processes and ensure their patients receive the necessary support. By attending meetings and presenting our services, we help build stronger relationships with our contract areas and ultimately help patients access the care they need. Patients rely on our services for their well-being, so it's crucial that our team works together effectively.

What are you most passionate about in your role?

Ultimately, I am passionate about getting the job done. I have a strong desire to see tasks through to completion, ensuring everyone involved is satisfied. I want to make sure the patients, dietitians, the wider team, and everyone else gets what they need from any situation which might come my way. That sense of accomplishment of doing a good job, or overcoming a challenging situation, and ensuring everything operates smoothly is what really drives me.

What do you like most about working in your role?

The camaraderie in our team is what I value most. Abbott creates a family-like environment where we genuinely care about each other and our work. I appreciate the support from my managers and colleagues, which I haven't experienced in other jobs. Our team's sense of purpose and the knowledge that we're making a difference are what I love most.

What do you do outside of work?

Outside of work, I'm a dedicated mum to my eight-year-old son. He keeps me busy, and we've recently started a fitness challenge together. He is motivating me to stick to my fitness goals, encouraging me all the time. We like to go for walks in the nearby country parks, enjoying the scenic views.

I also enjoy spending time with friends over a good bottomless brunch now and then! I also really enjoy a holiday abroad and recently had a fantastic trip to Dubai. Overall, I cherish moments in the sun, beautiful scenery, and taking on new challenges, both at work and in life.



Abbott's Hospital2Home service

Hospital2Home supports patients to manage their own health, and ensures the provision of ongoing support to patients during the transition from hospital back into their own homes. Our highly trained team have extensive training and ensure that patients are supplied with everything they need to continue their treatment at home including ensuring their feeds are delivered accurately and on time and ensuring that regular stock takes with patients are conducted, to help relieve the burden to primary and secondary care services.

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