

Vision of asthma management in Walsall

My name is Connor and I am 13 years old. I would like to share my recent visit to the children's ward in Walsall because it has really changed! I have been coming here for nearly 10 years now and it has always been the same. No one knows who you are or what anyone else has told you. You have to wait for ages and then you get admitted. On the ward it gets really boring.

This time it was different!

I'd been struggling with my breathing all night and my mum had too – she looked shattered. As usual, my chest hurt, I couldn't breathe and I felt panicky. I was shaky and scared. As soon as we got to the Paediatric Assessment Unit, we were met by a kind, cheerful nurse. She introduced herself as Sarah, did the usual checks, listened to my chest and brought my steroids and inhaler. She knew who I was and what I needed from my handheld record. The atmosphere was calm, controlled and reassuring. It seemed as if they were expecting us! I immediately felt better.

Sarah gave me an iPad to use during my stay!!! It had information about the ward, about asthma, the Walsall Asthma Support for Parents (WASP) group and a plan for all my medicines and reviews. The staff listened to **me**, asked me how I felt, what I was worried about and what we wanted. Sarah said why I needed to stay and gave a clear plan for the next few hours. There was no waiting for doctors like we used to. We were then taken straight through to the ward.

Next I was given a **VIP Card**. It got me into the locked kitchen and I could have anything I wanted! It was nice to have a drink as my throat gets dry with all the medicines.

I was expecting to stay overnight, but we were told I might not need to. The nurse gave me inhalers instead of a nebuliser and it worked fine. I think the calming atmosphere made us feel more confident in the staff and safer overall. I had more treatment, exactly on time.

Another nurse, Lisa, spent ages teaching me and my mum about asthma and gave us a training DVD to keep! I showed her how I use my inhaler and spacer and that I knew my asthma plan. Lisa arranged for our GP practice nurse to review me the next day. Surprisingly she suddenly said we now had a choice! To stay overnight or to go home with some Telehealth monitoring kit. Even though the ward is really nice now, home is so much better. Lisa made sure we could use the equipment and organised all the medicines and follow-up. Lisa called the GP to let him know I was going home and emailed my school. Amazingly, the drugs were available immediately! We were given a Priority Open Access card in case I got worse overnight. Finally, we were asked for feedback and Lisa showed us the 'You Said ... We Did' poster on the wall with loads of great suggestions from kids like me.

I was sad to leave, but happier to go home!

Fear to no fear!