

Care over Christmas: Susan's story

This is the story of a Bolton patient called Susan who became ill with pneumonia in December 2015.

'During December we went on a cruise holiday during which Susan developed a chest infection, which then developed into pneumonia in one of her lungs. She was treated by the ship doctor, which included administration of antibiotics through an intravenous drip. The treatment worked well, but unfortunately she wasn't able to continue with antibiotics for a period of about three days leading up to and during the flight back to the UK. We flew back to London on 23 December and joined our family for Christmas before returning to our home in Bolton on 27 December.

Although from 23 December she was taking the antibiotics provided by the ship doctor, during Christmas the infection returned (with a vengeance). At the first opportunity she arranged a GP appointment for lunchtime on 28 December, by which time she was showing some improvement though still coughing quite violently. The GP (a locum) gave her a thorough check up and reviewed the report, which had been provided by the ship's doctor. The GP wasn't satisfied that the infection was under control and arranged for her to attend the Ambulatory Care Unit at Bolton Hospital that afternoon.

We arrived at about 4.30pm. The team were expecting her and within minutes a nurse was taking blood samples and explaining what would happen during her visit. He advised that this would include analysis of the blood results, which the nurse explained would normally take about 1½ hours but that day was taking up to two hours; a consultation with a senior nurse; chest x-rays; and finally when all of the information had been assembled, a meeting with the on duty consultant. All went exactly as the nurse had described and we met the consultant at about 6.45pm when we were given a detailed description of her condition, which thankfully was better than we had thought, and an assurance that she was over the worst. We did thank the consultant for the good work and attention provided by him and his team.

During our time at the hospital we were offered hot drinks (twice) and a sandwich, which was more than we would have expected. The following morning we received a 'follow up call' from the hospital to check that all was well with my wife's condition.

All in all we were very impressed with the service provided, particularly taking into consideration the time of day and at a time when most people were still enjoying their Christmas break.'