

It's easy to criticise...

...but not everyone does.

Many people send cards and tributes about the care they and their relatives have received.

We receive thousands every year from our hospitals. Some are very poignant – others make you smile.

Some go into great details – others simply say 'thank you'.

Whatever they say, we know they're from the heart.

Here are just a few.

“I thought I was losing my daughter & you gave her back to me”

I have already sent a thank-you card to your A & E staff, but I wanted to email & re-iterate just how fantastic they are and how grateful I am to them.

I brought my 2 year old daughter in on Sunday - I'd phoned ahead as she was fitting & unresponsive. Your staff were waiting for us when we arrived and got straight into action - I really can't thank them enough. Their shared medical expertise meant that my daughter received excellent care & their compassion helped to reassure me during a very traumatic time.

I was very distressed at the time... your staff were constantly re-assuring me.

I will never forget the wonderful care that was provided. We live 260 miles away in Wales and were only visiting the area for 2 days when this happened. [My daughter] is now back home after a 48 hour stay on your Childrens ward and a few days rest at her nana's house. Although not quite back to her normal self she is well on the way to recovery.

Thank-you so much - I thought I was losing my daughter & you gave her back to me.

“So kind and gentle”

I would really like to say a BIG 'Thank you' to the staff that attended my Daughter who was admitted to A&E then transferred to Copford Ward at Colchester General Hospital in the early hours of Sunday Morning. The care that [she] received was fantastic. Only being 16, 1st time in hospital, having to have an operation and admitted on to a adult ward it was a very daunting time for her but every member of staff that attended to [her] were so kind and gentle and could not of done enough for her.

My Husband and I are very grateful and thank everybody concerned.

Thank you again, you were all wonderful

“How grateful my wife and my Mother are”

My Father passed away today in Birch ward, he was in the ward for four weeks, he was a very gentle man who never complained even at the worst of his illness, I am sure I am right that all your staff thought a lot of him.

We all hear horror stories about the NHS and I am sure some are true, but after the care my dear father received from all your staff they must be few and far between, I cant tell you how grateful my wife and my Mother are to all in Birch ward, [The doctor] was extremely sensitive and did all he could for my father please pass on my sincere thanks and also a staff nurse whose name slips my mind, she was so kind to me.

I do hope this wont get lost in the system

Kind regards

“What people are saying about NHS is rubbish”

I work on the Oncology wards at Essex County Hospital and wish to pass on to you a compliment that I received on behalf of the services we provide at Essex County Hospital as part of the NHS.

As I was assessing one of my cancer patients, they made the comment that caught my attention "what people are saying about NHS is rubbish and doesn't match or compare with the exemplary services we have received so far for..." (their ill family member).

I felt very encouraged and motivated that people recognise the efforts we make especially at this crucial stage of their life. Occupational Therapy is very significant in all areas of a person's life when they are faced with an illness that threatens their ability to carry on with daily life tasks. It serves as an enabler and a link (especially through adaptation, compensation, rehabilitation, curative...) between the residual loss/disability and daily activities popularly known as occupational performance.

Every human being has to participate in holistic life tasks and disease or illness can affect the mechanism. I am very proud of being able to continually make other people's lives have a meaning irrespective of whatever stage of their illness by providing this seamless service as a team and as an employee of the Trust.

“Very caring and professional”

I am just writing to say thank you very much to all the staff who took great care of my son during his stay last week at the Colchester General Hospital. [He] was unfortunate in sustaining a broken ankle whilst playing rugby.

The staff employed at the hospital are indeed very caring and professional and it is very obvious that each and every member of your staff take great pride in their nursing roles. I would also just like to pay my thanks to [the consultant] on his wonderful manner, especially in the way in which he took great time in explaining to [my son] exactly what was going to happen to him during his operation.

My kindest regards to all concerned.

P.S. The Patientline television system is well worth £3.50 per day!!

“I am eternally grateful for the support of the nurses and doctors on the Children's Ward”

I was very saddened to see the letter [in the local paper] from a mother regarding her daughter's experiences on the Children's Ward at Colchester Hospital.

My son has just spent nearly five weeks on the children's ward. His experiences could not have been more different.

I was fortunate to be with my son during his stay. I saw nurses support children with choosing food. collecting their meals and with eating their meals. Children were encouraged to exercise and collect their meals where able but certainly nurses helped the children confined to bed.

I also noted nurses offering alternative food such as sandwiches, cheese and crackers, jelly, etc from the well stocked ward fridge. Even though I was present the nurses checked with my son each meal to see what he had eaten. Once when he was particularly low the nurses phoned the main kitchen to see if they could find something else to tempt my son to eat.

My son has been seriously ill. I am eternally grateful for the support of the nurses and doctors on the Children's Ward. Nothing was too much trouble for them. I found their care both professional and loving.

“I have never seen so much kindness in one place in my whole life”

I recently had cause to stay in Nayland ward at Colchester hospital, I was taken ill with diabetes and septicimia.

During my stay in hospital I was cared for by the staff of Nayland ward. The reason I am writing to you now is because I wish to commend all the staff who cared for me during my stay. I can not praise highly enough the staff who nursed me back to health. I have never seen so much kindness in one place in my whole life.

I believe that Nayland ward must have some of the best nursing staff I have ever seen they are not only a credit to colchester hospital, they are a credit to the nursing profession and the NHS. I would have liked to have thanked them all individually before I left but there are so many, suffice to say that if it were not for them maybe I would not be alive now.

“Communication between the family and the medical staff was exemplary”

I am writing to thank you for the excellent treatment my wife's mother received during her recent stay in hospital.

There is no doubt in our minds that your patient charter was achieved in every way including the delivery of high standards of catering, cleaning and support services.

Can you please pass on our special thanks to [the doctors] and all the nursing staff on Peldon Ward.

It was very re-assuring for the family to be told that she would not be sent home until the problem was resolved and she was pronounced medically fit.

In particular, communication between the family and the medical staff was exemplary, we had no problem with the arrangement of meetings with [the consultant] through her secretary and telephone calls were always returned on the same day. [Another doctor] should also be commended for her excellent communication and caring attitude in the way she kept the family updated on [my wife's mother] progress.

Please feel free to pass on our compliments to any relevant persons you deem appropriate.

Please accept our congratulations for a job well done.

“Truly a rewarding and encouraging experience”

I have recently spent two weeks as an extra-mature student nurse on Brightlingsea Ward with my mentor. And I am very grateful indeed - her personality and her helpfulness are just as admirable as her knowledge and skilfulness. Truly a rewarding and encouraging experience!

“Nothing but praise for the nurses and doctors”

On behalf of my husband and I, I would like to say how satisfied we were with the care and support given during my recent labour and subsequent stay in hospital. My community midwife, along with the numerous midwives and healthcare assistants we saw during antenatal care, labour and then on Lexden Ward gave my husband, baby and I all the advice and support we needed whilst always acting professionally.

We were particularly grateful for this, as my husband's mother sadly passed away on the same day that Matthew was born. Again we have nothing but praise for the nurses and doctors who supported my mother-in-law during her time on Nayland Ward.

Although we have sent thankyou notes to the parties involved we just wanted to pass on our appreciation more officially, as all too often these days the only feedback received is of a negative nature.

“I found the hospital provided excellent care in all aspects”

Last weekend I had a 48 hour stay in the above ward and although not 'ill' needed medical attention.

I would like you to convey my thanks to the nursing team and in particular to the 3 nurses who made my brief stay comfortable to say the least.

I found the hospital provided excellent care in all aspects and these 3 girls are a credit to not only the hospital but to the nursing profession. please would you make sure that they are made aware of my thanks.

"Nothing but praise for our wonderful hospitals"

I agree wholeheartedly with Paula Fearn's letter (Daily Gazette 1st April), please STOP MOANING!!!!
I have nothing but praise for our wonderful hospitals in Colchester.

My husband was recently admitted (in February) to casualty at Colchester General, transferred to the Emergency Assessment ward and then to Layer Marney ward - the treatment he had was excellent throughout, the wards were all clean and the other patients, often in difficult circumstances, were cared for with compassion & good humour. Every member of staff from the cleaners to the doctors & consultants were friendly & helpful and, above all, caring.

I had a worrying letter last Saturday 2 weeks after my mammogram to attend Essex County in Lexden Road, yesterday for further investigation. My husband & I were understandably worried, but the care and attention shown to me was outstanding! I got the 'all clear' there & then, so from my initial x-ray on 11th March to yesterday 31st March, THREE weeks, I have had a problem identified & further investigated by kind, caring staff (including a wonderful Doctor who put himself to great trouble to make me feel comfortable & at ease).

I'm sure there are thousands more well satisfied patients & their families who are more than happy with the service provided by both of our hospitals - I'm also sure more 'Thank you's' are in order!! Well done all of you!!

"Staff were attentive and reassuring"

I was admitted to Peldon Ward 05/03/2011 and treated for Community Aquired Pneumonia. Discharged 11/3/2011.

I would like to express my thanks for the professional and efficient treatment by all staff during my stay.

The MAU-Medical Assessment Unit were prompt to begin their thorough procedure and find me a bed space where treatment began without delay.

Dr.Aftab and his staff explained the procedure planned and the nursing staff were attentive and reassuring despite the heavy demands on their time on both day and night shifts. Their friendly manner was appreciated and it was good to see how they worked as a team supporting one another under pressure.

Can I also thank the kitchen staff. The choice and standard of meals were very good and well presented, the vegetables deserve a particular mention.

I am most grateful for the care and treatment I received in your care.

"Service and facilities for my son were brilliant"

We have just returned home with my son today after a short period in the children's ward and cannot praise the staff or the service enough.

We felt at ease as soon as we arrived and it was all brilliant. The doctor who we saw at Essex County who said he needed an operation saw us throughout the day which we didn't expect at all and gave us advise and told us what to expect.

The service and facilities for my son were brilliant. Donna, the staff nurse was brilliant and very caring.

Many thanks to all the staff who helped him,

"You were ALL brilliant"

I have just spent two weeks in Nayland ward and i just had to write to say how great i was treated , everyone was fantastic doctors, nurses, and housekeepers.

The care and atmosphere of the ward helped me and my fellow patients to stay cheerful and happy which i think put us on the right track to recovery.

I cannot thank you enough you were ALL brilliant.

Thank you so much

"Very friendly and professional manner"

I would just like to compliment your staff on the way they treated my partner.

I called an ambulance around 6.20pm today, the paramedics arrived within 8 mins or so. My partner was complaining of abdominal pain, lost all colour and could not breath properly. The paramedics arrived and treated him. They then took us to a&e. We were taken into a room soon after we arrived.

The nurse came in and treated him and then a Doctor came in. An ultrasound was carried out and blood tests were taken. The staff that treated him did it in a very friendly and professional manner.

He was diagnosed and we were allowed to leave the hospital around 8.30pm.

I would just like to thank everyone that was involved in helping him. I was surprised by how quick he was dealt with.

Thank you so much.

Kind Regards

"Always someone on hand to answer questions"

As a family we would like to drop you a few lines to give thanks and praise for the care and attention my father received during his stay.

We were impressed how thorough you were with his health needs and all relevant tests, scans etc. (Dad being 77 years old, one often hears the opposite with care for the elderly).

The staff on Peldon ward were always pleasant, although often very busy there was always someone on hand to answer questions.

We would like to make one negative point, regarding his discharge, then without prior warning, I was contacted at 2pm, and basically asked when I could collect him, and we were led to believe that we would have 3 to 4 days notice. Even talking to staff on the evening previous they gave us no indication that it was imminent, we came away thinking that he would be there for several more days.

We have sent a message of thanks to the ward, but please pass on our positive feedback.

"Polite, attentive and friendly"

On 20th January this year, my wife was taken to your A&E Dept via ambulance, after passing out. The treatment she received was extremely good. The nurses and the lady doctor who attended her were polite, attentive and friendly. The Department was clean and all the staff I came across were helpful.

On Sunday 20th February, I took my wife to the EAU Dept (via an "Out of hours" Doctor) because she started passing out again. Once again she was extremely well looked after and a very careful assessment of her condition was made.

Again the Doctors, nurses and other staff were excellent, despite being busy. If I have one criticism, it is that they were understaffed, with one nurse, in the "Triage" bay, having to see to all the patients as well as answering the Ward phone. However, I do understand that there are financial constraints to consider and that the situation, probably, can't be helped.

The Dept was extremely clean.

Anyway, as a result of the diagnosis made, my wife was taken yesterday (21/2) to the Essex CTC in Basildon and had a pacemaker fitted. She is already feeling a great deal better.

So, once again, thanks to all your staff who dealt with us.

"We were very well looked after"

Please pass on my thanks to your staff in the children's part of A&E who were on duty from 1am Sat/Sun 12th/13th Feb 2011.

I had to rush in my daughter as she was poorly and we were very well looked after, especially by the nurse who I'm afraid I didn't catch her name.

It was very busy while we were there but we were dealt with in a friendly and efficient way! Please pass on my thanks to those concerned.

With kind regards

"So glad that my father was on your ward"

To the staff on Dedham Ward, especially nurses like Rachel., who had particular responsibility for my father, - my family and I were deeply appreciative of all the care and carefulness which was shown to my father, and also to my mother.

When he died unexpectedly quickly in the early hours of last Wednesday, the way in which the news was broken to both myself and my mum could not have been kinder, more professional or more gentle.

I am so glad that my father was on your ward; everything I observed, heard and experienced pointed to the fact that the staff did everything possible to benefit him and give him every chance of recovery. I would like to express profound gratitude on behalf of us all, my mum, my brother and sister, and all 14 grandchildren and great-grandson.

"Deep appreciation of the competence, care and courtesy"

I have recently spent a day in the Cardiac Angiography suite of Colchester's hospital.

I am writing to convey to you my deep appreciation of the competence, care and courtesy that I and all the other day patients received from every member of the cardiac team that day (28th December).

Dr. Islim's competence and courtesy to everyone was so reassuring, as was the care that I and my husband received from my designated nurse, Soma.

Prior to this day I had received comparable care and courtesy from Dr. Harkness, Linda my pre-assessment nurse, and from the staff at A&E on the evening of 23rd December.

I think this standard of competence, courtesy and care is one that any hospital should be proud of, and I would be delighted if you would convey my appreciation to all concerned.

God Bless.

"Everything seemed to work smoothly"

Please pass on our thanks to the staff who were looking after our 14 year old son, who we brought in to A&E around 2am on Saturday 22nd with chest pains. We were very pleased with the way he was treated both in A&E and on the Children's Ward.

Everything seemed to work smoothly and we felt reassured that he was getting the best possible care whilst he was in hospital. He was discharged Saturday evening.

The only improvements could have been to reduce the waiting time to move him from A&E onto the children's ward and to reduce the time waiting for his prescription to be fulfilled.

"Never been more impressed"

I would like to say a huge thank you to Diana Alexander, the sonographer who completed our 20 week ultrasound scan in Constable wing today.

This is my second child and after having both scans with yourselves and also private scans in Chelmsford, my husband and I have never been more impressed. She explained everything to us and took her time to tell us what was what and really made us feel comfortable and looked after.

Please see that she gets the praise she deserves!

"Took time to explain"

I have just returned from the Audiology Department at Essex County Hospital where my daughter had an appointment.

My daughter and I have been many times but the staff member, Jo who saw us today was exceptionally good and I want to provide feedback on this.

Jo completed my daughter's hearing test this morning and she was responsive to her (who is 5 and can be quite shy) and made her feel relaxed. Jo also explained everything to her that was happening and what would happen next time she came. Jo then took time to explain how the tests showed an on-going issue and how this would be used to inform the consultant at the next appointment.

Having been to many hearing tests (probably 6-7) which have all completed the same test, this is the first time we had had the test explained to us which has made a big difference to understanding why/how the decision to intervene further has been made.

Please pass on my compliment to Jo as I would like her to know how important it has been to have everything explained to both my 5 year old and me and the little extra time has gone a long way.

"Thank all the hospital staff"

I cannot speak highly enough of the treatment I received in A&E, Triage and Langdon Ward.

I had an endoscopy at 11.30am, which found I had a " Mallory-Weiss tear " and I was discharged about 3pm the same day.

I would like to thank all the hospital staff, paramedic, and ambulance girls for their absolute professionalism and the care they showed.

Would you please forward this email to the Paramedic and ambulance departments.

"Whole team was a closely-knit, professional and caring"

I entered the Angiography Suite on last Tuesday 7th at 08:30 hrs and would like to compliment all of the personnel, particularly the senior nurse (Staff Nurse?) for such a well-organized reception.

The whole team was a closely-knit, professional and caring entity and the procedure itself going smoothly.

Bleeding from the catheter entry point proved difficult to stem despite efforts by the staff and I was transferred to the Fordham Ward where finally the bleeding was controlled and I was discharged on Thursday.

Nursing in this ward was excellent and I would compliment personnel for their efforts and treatment, and in particular the Staff Nurse for her caring attitude and multi-tasking and expediting capability.

"Noticed how clean your hospital is"

I just wanted to thank everyone at the hospital that was involved with my Mum who sadly passed way in Langham Ward on Friday 3rd December.

When she was first admitted to the hospital she was unconscious and was not expected to make it through the night. She was moved to the Emergency Assessment ward where she was looked after by Mike, Helen (Night Staff) and Michelle.

They were all very kind and considerate and cared for mum in a very professional way.

She was then moved to Langham Ward where she was looked after by Nicky who was also very kind and considerate.

My sister, brother and I stayed with mum for 2 nights whilst she was at the hospital and the staff made us a comfortable as possible and even though they were always running around they made time to make us a few hot cups of tea.

We also noticed how clean your hospital is and we had a couple of meals in your canteen which were very nice.

Thanks again for everything you did for my Mum and us at this difficult time it was really appreciated.

"Words are inadequate"

Congratulations Becky you are a super breast care nurse and will also be a wonderful specialist nurse.

I have nothing but praise for the whole team at both the Essex County Hospital, the General Hospital and all concerned with cancer treatment.

Words are inadequate to express what a great job you all do in caring and nursing of all your patients.

Thank you all once again,

"At all times she was treated kindly, kept nice and clean"

I would like to thank all the nursing staff who looked after my mum for 2 days last week prior to her death on Saturday 6th November.

She visited A&E, the EAU ward and finally Wivenhoe ward. At all times she was treated kindly, kept nice and clean with fresh linen and gowns, and when it was needed given comfort through pain relief.

At no time was she alarmed and I am glad that her care was as it was, as she would have not liked to be frightened by more intervention.

Our family appreciated the no restriction on visiting times and it was very good to be with her as long as we wished.

Kind regards to all

"Answered all my questions (even the stupid ones)"

I would just like to say a big thank you to Dr. Kunle Soeodu.

My appointment was at 9.15 today in the Physiotherapy Dept., and I was so nervous, but he was so kind and patient explaining everything thoroughly.

He answered all my questions (even the stupid ones) and made me feel like he had all the time I needed.

Now I understand what is wrong and what isn't I feel so much stronger.

My husband was with me and as we left we both said what a lovely man he was and that we must make sure to pass on our appreciation.

It's all too easy to complain and make negative comments, but we feel it is also important that a good doctor is recognised.

Please pass on our thanks to him.

"Excellent and a credit to the NHS"

I had an breast examination on Thursday the 4th Nov at Lexden rd, I just want to thank all the staff and ladies who attended to me that morning.

They were not only excellent and a credit to the NHS, but there warmth and manner was wonderful.

I felt at ease at all time ,and i loved the woman that did the mammogram she was extra nice she put me at ease and made me feel there was nothing to worry about.

A big thank you again.

Kind regards

"How helpful a man by the name of Zion was"

I visited A & E, with my father in law on the morning of Friday 15th october and wish to comment on how helpful a man by the name of Zion was when we needed to find the pharmacy.

"How happy... with hospital"

I came in for an operation on 22nd October and was cared for in the Elmstead Ward. I wanted to send an email to express how happy I was with the hospital, the facilities and the amazing staff.

Firstly, I must mention that I felt the level of hygiene and cleanliness was outstanding. My mum used to work on midwifery wards, and even she commented on how clean everything was. This was really reassuring.

I would like to express my gratitude to the staff who looked after me and carried out my procedure that day. The staff at Colchester General are so professional but also seem to take a 'person-centred' approach – I was terrified when I came in as I hadn't had a general anaesthetic before but the staff explained everything to me in a thorough but sensitive way. Even when I went to the theatre, the staff were reassuring me and wiping my tears. I realise that staff in hospitals see people like me on a daily basis, but at no point did I feel that I was part of a 'routine' – I felt like an individual!

Both the ward staff and the theatre staff I met that day were **OUTSTANDING**. I wish I had taken all of their names so I could have mentioned them individually. I did pop in to drop off a box of celebrations which I hope they all enjoyed.

There is an awful lot that Colchester General is doing **RIGHT**... which is why I have taken a moment to let you know how grateful I am that my experience at the hospital was made to be as pleasant as possible. Please pass my gratitude on to the staff. Thank you so, so much.

"Medical team were extremely thorough"

I would like to thank you for the professional, caring, & overall excellent care provided by your teams at the Colchester General Hospital when my son was born on 3rd September 2010 in the birthing unit, & again when he was admitted to the Paediatric ward from the 10th to 12th September 2010 with jaundice.

In the birthing unit, the midwives (primarily midwifery student Sandra & Icenid midwife Mai-Ling) made the birthing experience as positive as possible for myself, & were reassuring when medical intervention needed to be sought.

After the birth they provided my husband & self time to bond with our son in private, which was greatly appreciated.

On the paediatric ward everyone in the team including the cleaning, nursing, medical, & play therapy staff, were extremely polite & willing to take the time to answer questions & address our concerns.

The medical team were extremely thorough with their investigations, which was reassuring for my husband & I.

Thanks again for making our hospital stays as positive & comfortable as possible.

"Domestics... clean effectively and conscientiously"

I, unfortunately, have spent the last 27.5 years in & out of hospitals, yet have never seen domestics anywhere, not even in N.I.C.E hospitals clean every corner, locker, over-bed tables etc as effectively and conscientiously as your staff.

Furthermore, nothing is too much trouble for them; making extra drinks, toast or any non-nursing work.

Please congratulate them all, particularly Brightlingsea where my husband had a short stay, Elmstead where we have both stayed.

I have also been on EAU, Copford and Layer Marney Wards, which I am pleased to say were a) extremely clean and b) of a consistently high standard.

"Deeply grateful for chaplaincy team's support"

Please may I ask for my thanks to be passed on to the chaplaincy team for their rapid response and the exemplary care that they gave to my Mother today..

My Mother, was admitted via A&E on Saturday afternoon and subsequently transferred to Dedham Ward awaiting Cardiology diagnosis and treatment.

I was with her at the weekend on a routine visit to her when this all took place. Having to leave again for home (in Yorkshire) I left a contact referral request in the chapel on my way out Sunday afternoon and a member of the team saw my mother on Monday morning.

She was deeply grateful for their support, as indeed I am myself.

I know that my Mother will likely be in the hospital for several days more and as she is physically disabled as well as undergoing some fairly traumatic treatment, it is highly unlikely that she will be well enough to get to the chapel so we are greatly indebted for the spiritual support and care that has been given.

"Information is laid out clearly and is informative"

I have recently had an appointment at The Physiotherapy Department and would like to pass on my views about the information leaflet that came with my letter. The information is laid out clearly and is informative, keep it up !

Kind Regards

"Thank the staff for the first-rate care"

Our mother (87) has just been treated for a broken hip at West Bergholt Ward, Colchester.

As a family we'd like to thank the staff for the first-rate care she received there, which was really excellent in every respect.

"Found a bed quickly [at midnight] without fuss"

On Friday 16/7 at 8.30pm my son (10) fell out of a tree and badly broke his left forearm.

I wanted to thank everyone involved in his care because it was first class. The ambulance arrived in ten minutes and he was seen immediately in A&E because he was badly shocked and in a great deal of pain.

He was given analgesia, x-rayed, a plaster put on and then transferred to the children's ward for an operation the next morning.

The ward was very busy. We were made welcome on the ward although it was about midnight and I was able to stay over being found a bed quickly and without fuss.

Next morning my wife returned and he was taken to theatre promptly where his arm was wired.

Through recovery, back to the ward and home by 2.30pm.

It was a very smooth patient pathway where all the components of care fitted together, and we, as a family were very grateful to all involved.

Please send our thanks to all concerned. My son is recovering well.

"Gentle and caring"

I gave birth to my son one month ago on 29th May, 2010, in the delivery suite at Colchester General Hospital, and am writing to praise the wonderful staff who helped me through the delivery.

The two midwives who were there to assist me were Elaine Snowball and Gemma Hubbard, and the care, help and understanding they offered throughout my delivery and the period immediately afterwards was absolutely second to none. They were both extremely confident, professional and very, very caring and supportive. I would like to express my sincere thanks to both these lovely ladies, and to tell them how very much their hard work was appreciated.

In addition to the fantastic care I received from my Elaine and Gemma, the doctor who inserted my cannula (I only remember his name was Anwar, I think, and that he was possibly a student doctor) is also deserving of praise for the excellent level of care and consideration he showed me at a difficult time. This doctor was extremely patient, gentle and caring to me, and managed to insert a cannula into my right hand whilst I was in established labour and having contractions. He took a great deal of time and care to insert the needle correctly first time, and was extremely careful and gentle in doing so, which resulted in me only suffering a minimal amount of distress (I am somewhat needle-phobic) and bruising afterwards.

I hope it would be possible for you to ensure my comments are passed on to the relevant members of staff, and for them to all receive the praise they are due for a job so well done.

"People may complain about the NHS, but..."

I went to one of my regular weekly physiotherapy sessions at the local health centre, and both Clara, who took me, and the physiotherapist remarked that they thought that my face had dropped a little.

So without further ado Clara drove me to Colchester General Hospital, where I was readmitted. I was due to have an MRI scan the following day anyway, so I just checked in a day early.

I had the scan, and the consultant told me that it revealed no further deterioration, and that I probably had a very small mini-stroke which is not uncommon, and which, in all probability, would not show up on the scan. So a little R&R was suggested, getting in some more physio, and so I stayed in for a week, in the rehab section of the Stroke Unit, which had only been opened a few months before.

People may continue to complain about the NHS, but I tell you, the level of care, concern and attention that I received at the Stroke Unit in Colchester is second to none.

They are brilliant in there. And we the patients had such fun and a good laugh. As I have mentioned before, having a good strong sense of humour is essential in repairing oneself following a stroke. At one stage I even suggested to a member of the staff, that perhaps our ward better resembled a scene out of 'One Flew Out Of The Cuckoo's Nest'.

Dear matron

The lovely Tiptree nurses are a jolly lot of gals;
so pretty and so feminine, excluding Denis and his pals.
Just see those smiling faces as they stick the needle in.
And it's all beneath the eagle eye of Matron.

San comes in a-smiling, "Wakey wakey, rise and shine.
She scorns your manly effort to produce a feeble whine.
I'll just do your blood pressure, put the cuff on nice and tight.
And it's all beneath the watchful eye of Matron.

Imelda comes with little cart, handing out the pills.
Have a glass of Movecol or would you like some squills? (a
diuretic made from the sea onion)
You've an enema at ten o'clock which I'm going to enjoy."
And it's all beneath the beady eye of Matron.

Sue wraps you round in plaster, laughing fit to bust.
She doesn't stop until she feels you're well and truly trussed.
Then with playful grin she tears it off plus half your manly hair.
And it's all beneath the steely eye of Matron.

The cleaners come with mops all wet and slosh them fro and
to.
They maroon you in a corner and you badly need the loo.
The caterers say, "Oh sorry dear, there's only yoghurt left."
And it's all beneath the baleful eye of Matron.

Staff members gather with mops, bed pans, etc
Oh we are the staff of Tiptree and we care for everyone.
You patients should be happy to provide our daily fun.
So scream and cringe, don't try to hide, or there'll be worse to
come.
And it's all beneath the gleeful eye of Matron.

"Bedside manner and clear care was superb"

My wife had a hysteroscopy today in the Elmstead Day Unit. It's our second visit to the unit and we have found the staff superb on both occasions.

Particularly today the staff nurse Liz Savage - we noted the name from her badge - was an immense credit to you. Her bedside manner and clear care for her patients was superb but also the way she complimented and treated the junior nurses was equally creditable.

We hope that this will be fed back to those who are concerned

Best wishes