

A DAY IN THE LIFE OF...

Nigel Brown



My first task when I arrive is... to check e-mails and my “**to-do list**”.

One of the biggest challenges I face is... attempting to keep up with the ever-changing drugs being abused in the community. Trying to square up the necessary flexibility in the assays with ISO:15189 and the Forensic add on ILAC G19 is a challenge.

My favourite thing about my job is... no two days are the same. One day I can be working in the laboratory, developing and validating a new method, the next day can be taken up with a report on a client’s drug use for social services; the next can consist of meetings; the next can involve giving rotating biomedical scientist staff an introduction to **toxicology**.



The thing that makes my job unique is... the nearest person doing a job like mine in the NHS is Sheffield. Going north, it would be Edinburgh or Glasgow.

My route into the role involved... starting as a Junior B Medical Laboratory Scientific Officer in 1982, after finishing my degree at Newcastle University. I went into research in 1989 and 20 years later came back to the NHS measuring immunosuppressive drugs for the liver transplant service at King’s College Hospital. Finally, I came back to the North East for my present job. I never had a plan – it just sort of happened.



I am a **Consultant Clinical Scientist in Toxicology at Wansbeck Hospital in Northumberland**. I lead the toxicology service and my responsibilities include reporting drug screens, post-mortem toxicology for the coroner, and preparing reports for social services.

One day I can be developing and validating a new method, the next can be taken up with a report



My typical lunch is... a cheese sandwich and **apple**.

My job fits into the wider healthcare context... by providing support for the drug addiction recovery services north of the River Tyne, while the reports to social services can assist in determining the course of action to be taken when a family member has issues with drug addiction. As we provide a regional service, we support labs from Middlesbrough northwards and across to Whitehaven on the Cumbrian coast.

If I get a few spare minutes then I... eat cake, do some long-term planning, or some continuing professional development. Day trips to London for meetings mean seven hours uninterrupted and if I’ve got the day off, then a **cycle** ride in Northumberland restores the equilibrium.

I feel like I’ve had a good day when... I’ve cleared quite a bit of the “to-do list”, I haven’t forgotten that I’m on Dad’s Taxi all evening, and there are no teenage strops when I get home. **BMS**

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