Claire Lindsay, Specialist Paediatric Bladder and Bowel Care Nurse, Northern Devon Healthcare Trust, takes centre stage.

How did become a paediatric bladder and bowel care nurse?
I qualified as a paediatric nurse in 1989 and gained my degree in specialist practitioner community children’s nursing in 2001. I developed an interest in continence in my previous role as a community children’s nurse. Working alongside families and children with spina bifida and additional needs, toileting issues always seem to be at the bottom (pardon the pun) of health professionals’ list of priorities. However, for parents driving their child around in a motability vehicle looking for a toilet to change a nappy or pad, it is a different story.

I have been in my role as clinical and professional lead for a paediatric bladder and bowel care service for past 8 years. Initially, this was a stand-alone service, with myself as the only paediatric bladder and bowel care nurse in Devon. I have taken the service forward, and now manage a team of five nurses.

What does your role entail?
My role is very varied. I help run nurse-led clinics in Devon, and have my own caseload of children with bladder and bowel dysfunction of any age up to 19 years. Initially, this was a stand-alone service, with myself as the only paediatric bladder and bowel care nurse in Devon. I have taken the service forward, and now manage a team of five nurses.

What are the challenges of your work?
The challenges we face are varied. We attend safeguarding meetings on a regular basis and act as advocates for children whose parents are unable to meet their child's health needs. Waiting list times and caseload management continue to be ongoing challenges, but we do our best to see and treat children and discharge them back to their health visitor or school nurse as soon as is appropriate. Often, we are seen as a ‘free nappy service’; however, once parents see the advantage of their child being toilet trained and supported, they are very happy and grateful.

What do you enjoy most about your role?
Children telling us that they are clean and dry, and being able to send them certificates for their hard work. We are fortunate to be able to concentrate our efforts on one area of a child's development. Being continent or having one's continence managed in a proactive, supportive and dignified way is basic nursing at its best.

Where can people find out more about your work?
I have a long history with the children's continence charity ERIC UK, who helped me gain a lot of my initial knowledge and expertise. I travel around the country providing ERIC training, which is a good way of networking and providing support to new services. More information can be found at www.eric.org.uk.

Tell readers about your professional role, an event you recently attended or an eye-opening experience you had on the job. Write to:
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