

## The day in the life of an ALSG volunteer

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### **As a volunteer instructor, what is involved in delivering the course?**

I am involved in instructing, but also in the working group and as a course director on APLS courses in Nottingham. Being an instructor is hard work, but if everything is organised well, it is straightforward to teach on the courses. Preparation is important so I am familiar with the contents of the manual, and to be comfortable to teach any of the stations and simulations within the course. This takes quite a bit of preparation time as a new instructor, but in time, with doing regular courses this isn't too time consuming but everyone is different in how they prepare. Once on the course, the two days are intense and non-stop, with challenges from different and varying candidates on every course. APLS is very varied and you instruct with all kinds of health professionals which is interesting and I find very appealing.

As a course director this changes quite a lot. Several months before the course it is important to make contact with the course centre, talk to the other volunteer instructors and ensure that there is a variety of candidates. We currently have a meeting every fortnight with the course directors for a course in June, and we started preparing in March. This takes quite a lot of time, but is also a challenge and I enjoy the process of setting up a good course with my fellow directors.

### **How long does it take you to prepare for a course?**

I stay up to date with what is in the manual and I challenge and anticipate the types of questions candidates may ask, but I don't read it front to back before every course, but instead often use it as a reference. My clinical role is in children's ED, so I actually use a lot of what APLS teaches in my everyday role which really helps.

### **How many years have you been a volunteer for ALSG?**

I have been an instructor since 1996, so this is my jubilee year! In 25 years the course has changed and evolved a lot and it has been a big part of my life and it probably shaped my career.

### **What is your full time role?**

I am currently a trainee paediatric advanced clinical practitioner (PACP) and I'm also in my first year of my Masters course. I work full time, with 15 hours as a paediatric emergency department sister and 22.5 hours as a trainee PACP.

### **Is teaching easy to fit around your full time job?**

It is not always easy and takes up a big part of my time outside of work. I get some study time for APLS courses, but as I am involved in the ALSG working group, I do a lot of that in my own time. The course director role is also totally in my own time. This can be a bit much

whilst I'm also studying, but so far I am able to fit it in. As long as I can go for my daily run I can manage most challenges!

As a working group member I am involved in editing the current manual and writing chapters for the next edition. This takes up quite a few evenings too, but I feel honoured to be part of that.

### **What are the benefits of teaching?**

I learn something on every course. Teaching people and instructing with some amazing fellow APLS instructors inspires me and keeps me fully updated on what is happening in the real world of paediatric emergency medicine. I have to keep reading and I have to keep thinking about what I'm doing so that I can teach it in a structured way.

Working clinically gives me a lot of examples of what happens to real children and that helps a lot when teaching. Bringing the APLS workshops and simulations to life with real life examples is one of the best parts of APLS. I have heard so many interesting stories while teaching that have enriched my knowledge of emergency nursing and will help me in my career as a PACP in the future.

### **What does it mean to you to be a volunteer with ALSG and part of APLS?**

I don't think I would be taking on the challenge of a Masters course at the age of 51 if I had not been nominated with instructor potential all those years ago and I am still grateful for that.

Someone recognised the potential of an APLS instructor in that very junior A&E nurse and gave me the opportunity to develop and to teach all over the UK, be involved in the Belgian and Dutch APLS courses and now being on the ALSG APLS working group, talking to people from all over the world who do what I do. I am still surprised when I'm in meetings with some amazing people from Australia, Sweden, The Netherlands and many more places and I have to pinch myself that I am on that same zoom call myself!

APLS also gave me the most precious group of friends that developed after a faculty meal where we decided to organise a trip the Lake District. This was 20 years ago and this group of APLS instructors and their families are now my closest friends. We have repeated our Lake District visit once a year for 20 years. My (APLS instructor) husband and I married in the Lake District 15 years ago surrounded by this group of people, so you can say I actually had an APLS wedding!