A DAY in THE LIFE of...
a Newborn Hearing Screener

The aim of Newborn Hearing Screening Wales (NBHSW) is to identify babies with hearing impairment which is of sufficient severity to potentially cause a disability without additional help and support.

Jaynie Scourfield, a Newborn Hearing Screener based in West Wales General Hospital, Carmarthen, tells Pawb about her typical day.

"An important part of our role is explaining the types of screening tests used and the possible outcomes and, where relevant, follow up arrangements."

"Usually the first task of the day for us is to identify the babies that are eligible for screening that day. We then visit the postnatal ward and the Special Care Baby Unit to find out which babies are still in hospital and are suitable to be screened and identify any other babies on the postnatal ward which are not on the database.

The first points of call are the midwife in charge of the postnatal ward and the nurse in charge of the Special Care Baby Unit to ensure that the screener has all the information that she needs prior to approaching the mother. We then locate the eligible babies and make initial contact with the mothers.

"An important part of our role is explaining the types of screening tests used and the possible outcomes and, where relevant, follow up arrangements. We use a flow chart to visually show the mothers the screening tests and outcomes. When we are happy that the mother has understood all the information and we have answered any questions we ask the mother to complete the consent form.

"The next step is to screen the baby. In order to do this the baby must be quiet and settled and the environment around the baby should also be quiet. This may mean that we have to go back to a mother several times in a morning before the baby can be screened! Babies are screened using one or two types of tests and we give the results immediately. Many babies are discharged from NBHSW at this point but some babies require further screening tests which are done either on the postnatal ward the following day, in a local clinic or at home. Additionally some babies will be referred for further tests with an audiologist.

"Our next step is to ensure that the parents have understood everything, have written information on the outcome of the tests write up our notes and inform the midwife or nurse in charge if the baby needs further tests.

"At the end of a screening session we upload the screening results from the equipment on to the computer system.

"As with most other jobs, we have a variety of administrative tasks to complete each day including inputting and checking results on the database, sending letters to health visitors and GPs, and arranging appointments for babies not yet screened.

"We also spend some of our working week screening babies at clinics or at home and these can be anything from all day clinic in more rural areas to an afternoon session in towns or cities.

"Really, there is no such thing as a typical day for a New Born Hearing Screener – the number of babies on a postnatal ward can vary greatly and outside influences such as noise levels and whether or not babies are settled, or even if the mother and baby are available can hamper the progress of the screener greatly! The only constant in our day is the actual screening process which is the same whether undertaken on the postnatal ward, clinic or at home."

Would you like to tell us about a TYPICAL DAY IN YOUR ROLE for the next edition of Pawb? If so, please contact susan.belfourd@wales.nhs.uk or (029) 2082 7640