



People at our Heart Awards

Quarter 4, 2021/22

Individual Winners

Ruth Douthwaite, Staff Nurse

Reproductive Medicine, Centre for Life

I would like to nominate Ruth as she has continuously gone above and beyond every time, I have been lucky enough to have her look after me sporadically over the last 2 years at the Fertility Centre. From supporting right from the get-go to get you into the best position possible before treatment, to emotional support, efficiently taking you through the process to most recently, doing the procedure for me. She got very excited when she found out I was pregnant with my first daughter and made me feel very special and has done since when looking at photos and asking about her on my most recent visits. I had a chemical pregnancy in December, later that week I had to ring to make shipping arrangements and I got Ruth, she was so sympathetic, so genuine in her words and gave me the hope and support I needed at that time, even though she hasn't been dealing with my CP and I had not mentioned it during our conversation, she made it so personal. A few weeks later, when I walked in and saw it was Ruth doing my last iui procedure, I was over the moon and instantly felt relaxed, confident and that it was a good sign for my potential future pregnancy that she was doing it. She is like a rock that you feel you can completely depend upon. She is efficient but so caring and genuine. I immediately feel at ease, given hope and not just a patient. She is an absolute credit to the hospital, and you would be hard pushed finding anybody else who could deliver so exceptionally, supportive care.

Kyle Rutherford, Multi-skilled Engineering Apprentice Estates

I suffer badly with MS and as such struggle to use the nurse call button in Hospital. Kyle has on 3 occasions manufactured a more suitable buzzer to help with this situation. Kyles willingness and helpfulness are both a credit to himself and the hospital. Kyle is still persevering in finding a solution. Kyle on all occasions has been a pleasant and helpful young man.

Team Winners

All Staff, Ophthalmology, RVI

We have just held our first family video call with my Aunt since her surgery last week and its impact has been transformative - for her and for her older siblings scattered across the globe from Newcastle to Australia. Living, also, with learning disabilities and increasing co-morbidities, the impact of her worsening vision on her quality of life and her engagement with her wider family cannot be understated. Pandemic restrictions, her own tendency to become unsettled in unfamiliar settings and the need for a higher risk GA all contributed to a potentially fraught situation; it is because of this that I feel I must write to commend the team for their support for her and their communication with me, even through the inevitable COVID-related delays to listing. I know that there would have been a large group of people involved in her care but Julie Mulroy, Lisa Huddleston, Carole Third, Elizabeth Angus & Claire Pinder all had direct contact with me, often during times when they were actually off-duty; their dedication - and that of Matthew Rowley, the Trust MCA lead - in looking after her best interests was nothing short of superlative. Her sisters and brother have been delighted to see my Aunt - the baby of their generation - spark back to life. This has also been something of a secret shopper experience by proxy - our Dad worked in Ophthalmology at the General and, latterly, at the RVI and am sure would have been proud to see what the department is doing, today.

Emma Ness & Alyson Carrick

Trainee Nurse Specialists, Sexual Health Nursing Staff, Community

Emma Ness and Alyson Carrick both started working in our department in August 2020. They are both in training posts and despite COVID-19, staff isolating, short staffing and sickness, they have both “come aboard” and stopped us sinking. Considering they have only had a few months of specialist training they have both shown true enthusiasm and excellent skills by assessing, diagnosing and treating patients, which are occasionally very complex and in situations where their needs are highly confidential and of a sensitive nature, this is all within a few months of starting their training post. The knowledge they have already retained is first class as well as working to national and local guidelines. As a duty nurse and having to manage the clinics daily, considering last minute short staffing, isolating, staff having to go off shift at last minute, sickness, these two nurses have “stepped up”, had to put their little training into practice and think for themselves. They have taken intense pressure off the daily running of the clinic and have kept the clinic running on time by seeing patients (often very complicated) when asked. They often look to see what needs to be done and don’t need to be asked. They are both dynamic and never complain about the complexity of the patient when they are asked to see one. They are both an asset to New Croft Centre and Newcastle upon Tyne hospitals Trust. We are so pleased to have them both as part of our dynamic team.

Highly Commended Nominations

Abby Taylor, Staff Nurse

Ward 12 PICU, RVI

My little 5-week-old baby boy Leo was taken to the RVI on the evening of Saturday 19th February having problems with his breathing. We found out he had caught the virus RSV and needed support in hospital. The virus gets progressively worse until days 5-7. It was a horrendous time watching him deteriorate daily until then. He was taken to intensive care for more help on a CPAP machine. Sadly, my nightmare got worse when at the same time I caught COVID. PICU was incredibly supportive and after speaking to infection control said I could visit if I wanted to (with extra PPE) though it wasn't advised. I chose not to risk it and stayed at home to recover while my husband stayed with Leo. It was then that Nurse Abby really went above and beyond her duties. I received a lovely handmade get well soon card with a poem she had made for me from Leo with his footprints on the front. She also took the time to decorate his cot with handmade Leo bunting. They provided a knitted blanket and a crocheted octopus for Leo to cuddle. The octopus is given to comfort babies away from their mothers as the tentacles remind them of the cord in the womb. It was a terrifying time for us as a family and those little gestures from someone I have never met made all the difference to me at home. The level of care and teamwork was outstanding between PICU and ward 2a. Knowing Leo was being cared for by nurses like Abby was so reassuring while I was stuck at home praying for a quick recovery for Leo.

Individual Nominations

Nicola Dempsey, IBD Specialist Nurse

Ward 30 Gastroenterology

Nicola is an amazing IBD nurse. She is always at hand when needed and has supported me throughout my diagnosis to my surgery. Her attention to detail is perfect and always has the time for each and every patient that she cares for. She takes the time to get to know her patients to a personal level, so that she can provide the best care. I have worked with Nicole for 7 years and would just really like her amazing hard work to be recognised by others.

Annette Driver, Technical Instructor

Physiotherapy

Annette has helped me with my rehab as I lost the use of my legs. Her charm and wittiness are infectious. She pushes me really hard to achieve my goals and is always full of praise and encouragement. I always enjoy our sessions even though they are hard, and she always stays behind to have a chat and a laugh. She even calls in to check on me in her spare time. I think of her as a friend now and a very good one. She has a heart of gold and would do anything to help me. She has made my long stay in hospital more bearable with her kindness and for that I thank her with all my heart.

Emily Goerzen, District Nurse

District Nursing Newcastle North, Community

Family commended District Nursing Team and specifically Emily Goerzen for the caring, responsive and compassionate End of Life care shown to their father in his last days of life. The team allowed and supported the family to deliver hands on care which was very important to them and were very grateful for the support and empathy Emily was able to give. This demonstrated assessment of both the patient's and family's needs, recognising what is important to them and supporting them in that role. Respecting individual wishes and holistically planning care. Being responsive, compassionate, and empathetic whilst delivering End of Life care.

Helen Harrison, Community Specialist Dietitian

Nutrition, Community

Helen rang to introduce herself as our new dietitian and to catch up as we'd slipped through the net for follow up. She was so easy to talk to but most importantly she really listened. It has been a long time since I came away feeling empowered both as a parent/carer but also on behalf of my daughter. So many times, things aren't looked at holistically or language is so clinical that even a 'good' appointment can leave you feeling flat and exhausted. Helen congratulated our progress, she factored in the effects of disability and anxiety, she firmly put us at the heart of the consultation. Feeding is a very emotive issue but today it was emotive for all the right reasons. If every professional had the

same empathy and gentle manner it would significantly decrease the stress of appointments and involving people in the care of your child.

Rozi Kakrida, Physiotherapist

TIMS Service

Rozi attended her gym prior to work for an early morning swim. While in the pool a gentleman suffered a cardiac arrest. Rozi acted quickly and managed to get this person out of the pool with assistance, assessed the individual and when unable to find a pulse started CPR. There were no other trained personnel in attendance and Rozi continued the cardiac compressions for 15 mins until the paramedics arrived. Following this event Rozi then arrived at work on time in the Tyneside Integrated Musculo-skeletal Services (TIMS) and proceeded to manage her full caseload of patients despite being visibly shaken by the experience. It is huge credit to Rozi that she was able to be so professional and committed to her patients that she was able to work that day, highlights the potentially life-saving impact that CPR training can have and demonstrates Rozi as a selfless, brave and caring colleague and citizen.

Kim McDonald, Staff Nurse

Outpatients, FH

I arrived for an outpatient appointment and was apprehensive about my visit and quite stressed. Nurse McDonald identified that I was in the wrong waiting area and whilst taking me to the right area was a 'ray of sunshine' on a difficult day. Her inter-personal skills are amazing, and she has a great sense of humour. I later thanked her personally for her empathy and comforting words. She replied, 'That is what we are here for'. My wife was with me and fully supports my comments.

Dawn O'Sullivan, Diabetic Midwife

I was diagnosed with GD at 9 weeks pregnant for the 3rd time. This was the first time using the RVI and Dawn was so fast at setting up insulin, reassuring me, and sorting out my medication. I have 2 other children, one with additional needs, and struggled physically and emotionally with my pregnancy due to the diabetes and controlling it. I came for a scan one day, and was not given a scan photo, and I became upset. Dawn arranged for me to get an additional scan so I could show my children their baby brother to help them understand he was on his way. She really didn't have to do this. She rang me every week during my entire pregnancy, lifting my mood, talking to me about any concerns I had, and

explaining various complications that arose due to the GD. Not only did she talk to me about medical issues but whilst I also was having personal issues, she took the time to listen and understand. She genuinely went above and beyond every single week, and to give just one example would be so hard. She is an amazing asset to your team, and she really is one of the best midwife's I've ever come across. Her passion for the job shines through, and she really does care about you as a person, as well as guiding you through the pregnancy as safely as possible. If it weren't for Dawn, I don't think I'd have made it through my pregnancy with my mental health intact. My son would have struggled with raised blood sugars, and I'd have stopped the insulin a long time ago.

Team Nominations

Tony Watson, Emily Rotherham & Nathan Taylor Speciality Trainee & Radiologists Radiotherapy Treatment, NCCC – FH

I am currently undergoing radiotherapy and Chemo at the Freeman. I would like to nominate everybody who is currently looking after me, however in particular, praise should be given to Dr Tony Waton for his kindness, professionalism and his unlimited patience. I would also like to nominate Emily Rotherham and Nathan Taylor for their professionalism, upbeat attitude, and kindness.