



People at our Heart Awards

Quarter 4, 2020/21

**All Nominations
and Winners**

Individual Winners

Adrian Douglas, Nurse Specialist, Outpatients Eye Clinic

I accompanied my 91yr old mother in law Mavis Lee on the above day. It was getting very close to closing time when she was informed she required another injection for her Macular degeneration. Adrian was responsible for viewing her images and then informing us that due to the dept. being refurbished she'd have to come back the following week. This would have been difficult to get someone to accompany her but also that getting in and out of cars isn't as easy as it used to be. Adrian without any hesitation decided that he was going to deal with the injection the same day. Despite the time of day and his shift potentially coming to an end he went what we felt above and beyond what anyone would expect. Adrian arranged a wheelchair and took Mavis himself to ward 39 where she received the injection. I was allowed to accompany her to the ward and was kindly asked to sit in an appropriate waiting area for her. Mavis despite being 91 is a very switched on lady - she described her experience as "I felt like the queen". As I now work within the NHS and spent 30 yrs in the police force I believe in professionalism and quality of service to the public. Adrian was not only this but pleasant and made our visit extremely memorable because of his personal attention. I believe Adrian stood out from the crowd and he should be acknowledged for this by means of 'a people at our hearts award' He is a credit to the RVI.

Individual Winners

Helen Ritson, Young Adult Care Co-ordinator, Nephrology Specialty - FH

1. Helen is an outstanding member of the Renal Team at the Freeman, she goes above and beyond to look after the Young Adult Kidney Patients. She is always there for her patients and stops at nothing to ensure they are looked after and happy as they can be. Helen has been marvellous with me since I transferred to the Freeman, she visited me in my paediatric appointments and met up with me before transferring to the Freeman to help me settle in to Adult Nephrology. She met up with me because she wanted me to know that she would always be there for me no matter what as she is always there to listen to anyone's problems and does whatever she can to help put those problems right. Helen has helped a lot of her patients emotionally as she has been there for them to talk to her. Helen has been there to listen and understand what her patients are going through, she organises wonderful get-togethers for the young adults and makes everyone feel special regardless of their health. Helen ensures that all her patients can live the best possible quality of life and be happy regardless of their health. Being a kidney patient shouldn't stop young adults from leading a good life and Helen makes that point very boldly in her work. Receiving an award would only be the very least she deserves for all her support she has given to her patients. Helen's job is a very personal thing to her and she explains that to a lot of people how much it means to her. All the support Helen gives comes from her heart because she wants to make a difference.
2. I don't know what to write here really but I probably wouldn't even be alive today if it wasn't for this amazing woman! She is utterly incredible, complete miracle worker and is there for me no matter what. She's picked me up off the floor in pools of tears, she's made me feel better when no one else can. She's fought for me to get my benefits and she's been able to get things out of my head that even I don't understand. Helen Ritson is such a life line to myself and many other young adults who have renal problems. Helen has recently had a serious accident and is current out of work but I have heard she is on the mend. How incredible would it be if she stood up and received this award? I know you say it is quantity not quality with these nominations but i have spread the word for all the other fellow young adult kidney patients to also nominate Helen in hope that one of them may win. Helen really does deserve the whole world and more!

3. I would like to nominate Helen for the work she does at the Freeman Hospital. I first met Helen before I transferred from paediatrics to adults in 2017. From the moment I met her, she was so kind and helpful. Through the years she has helped me with various things such as helping me on who to contact when my mental health was bad and helping me with job searches. She also helps organise the kidney residential trips which is where I've met loads of people with the same condition as myself and without Helen organising these things, I would never have met the most amazing people. Helen truly deserves this award for everything she does for everyone, she is an amazing lady!
4. Helen Ritson made my transition to adult care of complete ease. I moved from the RVI aged 17 with two transplants behind me when I turned 23 I was waiting to go on dialysis and for a third transplant. Helen went above and beyond from that time, helping me apply for PIP and UC, whilst being present at all appointments and really being a superstar day and night for me and my family. She has shown me that despite my illness, I can go on to achieve things and have a great life. I have now been transplanted for the third time for three months and I honestly believe that without Helen and her amazing work I wouldn't be here today, she has dealt with my complex mental health with ease and she is one of your trust's true heroes. For her, this is more than a job and it shows, for that I am so grateful especially in a department that is often not given the recognition it deserves.
5. Helen has been amazing both since starting this role and as a nurse. I have personally know her from having my transplant at 13.5 years old and she goes the extra mile for all her patients with being a friendly voice on the other end of the phone to guiding them to the correct place for they ask for. She has gone through a tough time since December 2020 but she is doing her best to get back to work so she can be there for her patients. A woman with a big heart for all that know her and willing to do as much as she can for them.
6. I have known Helen since a few years after my first kidney transplant, when I was about 19. We met at a young adult residential where Helen was the first adult to understand how I was feeling. She is hilarious, fun, kind, encouraging and knowledgeable. When I had my second transplant in 2019, Helen was there especially on the days my family couldn't visit. She held my hand while I had tubes out, and brought a portable DVD player to give me something else to do. It was like having an extra friend visit. Even in there she was fun to be around and relaxing. She talked my boyfriend and I around copying with this without my parents around – nothing is impossible when Helen is on your side. Helen has made me braver and kept me stable through intense emotional experiences – and I am not even a regular Freeman patient! Helen has had an awful time the last few months. Once, she told me that organ rejection is really just a 'blip' something my kidney can get through I think maybe this is Helen's blip and she'll be back being incredible soon.

Team Winner

Internal Medicine/ED/COE Directorate

TPN Monitoring Team, Ward 16 FH

My first introduction to the TPN team from the Freeman Hospital was in April 2019 when Hayley Leyland and Lisa Gemmell visited me in Sunderland Royal where I was a patient. They advised of their speciality in providing the necessary nutrition that would help me put on weight, so they arranged for me to be admitted to the Freeman where they trained me to administer the TPN over a period of two weeks the care and attention to detail was exceptional. When discharged on the 1st May 2019 Hayley called at our house after work to make sure we were comfortable administering our first TPN this was 7pm in the evening Hayley also called the following morning at 7:30am before work to assist us disconnecting the TPN. We feel that the care I received from the whole team including Dr N Thompson was exceptional they helped me recover from a bowel operation where my weight was an alarming 47kg my weight is now is 73kg they monitored everything and Lisa made adjustments to the nutrition whenever required, we kept in touch on average once every two weeks the care eventually resulted in having a full reconstruction of my bowel on 25th September by Mr F Birgin where I no longer need a Stoma Bag and lead a normal life thanks entirely due to the TPN team. Big thank you for going the extra mile.

Highly Commended

All Staff on Ward 20 Plastic Team- RVI

I have been qualified since 1984, I have seen and worked in many areas. I have previously had treatment as a patient however, I was admitted to Ward 20 following a nasty dog bite and infection which required surgery and IV antibiotics. I was admitted twice due to ongoing problems with infection. All the staff from domestics, sister, nurses and doctors, theatre staff and administrative staff were very professional. It was Christmas, busy period with COVID and I was still in shock over my traumatic attack but the staff were lovely and despite being qualified, I was also supported because of some apprehension of having surgery. I have to say I felt proud to be working in the RVI and knowing there was a great team for the patients.

Iraje Nadeem Ahmed, Radiographer, Radiotherapy Treatment - NCCC

I would like to nominate Iraje Ahmed for an award as part of your scheme this year. I was diagnosed with Breast Cancer for the second time in 2 years I hadn't received Radiotherapy previously and on my first appointment I was filled with anxiety, fear and dread. Iraje was the very first person I met as part of the Radiology team she met me with such kindness, openness, joy and empathy I thought "this is going to be ok", I didn't meet her every time but those I did she made me feel I mattered, remembered my name and small (but important to me) details. Her kindness and consideration made me feel like a friend as if "I can do this" and relaxed in what is a quite challenging, upsetting and frightening time. Iraje was so professional in her work too I asked a lot of questions and was answered or shown in a way that was easy for me to digest the courtesy she afforded me was above and beyond "normal". I really wanted to give her a big hug when it was my final day as she had become important to me and my wellbeing (obviously no hugging was done due to COVID-19). Iraje took photos of my Daughter and I "ringing the bell" which I wasn't sure was the right thing to do but made a very positive and emotional end to my treatment and a lovely way to say "Goodbye". Iraje is an exceptional person who has changed my entire perception of an awful time she is truly amazing.

Kyron Archer, Maintenance Craftsperson – Joiner, Building - RVI

I work on Ward 37 as a Staff Nurse since refurbishment in 2018/19 we noticed there was no hand rails in two of our cubicles to assist patients to get up from the toilet. We have sent numerous reports to various people to no avail. As of yesterday 04.01.21 I logged a report with estates and early Tuesday morning, a tradesman came to the ward and was very pleasant and considerate. He carried out the job efficiently and went above and beyond locating equipment to make sure that our patients had safety whilst using this equipment.

Vicky Armstrong, Sister, Dermatology Outpatients - RVI

Constantly warm and welcoming knows patient by name and makes an effort to make them feel safe and welcome. Always joking with staff and patients makes the experience a much nicer one on the whole.

Tracey Hoyer, Medical Secretary, MSU Medical Secretaries

My Mother and I would like to nominate Tracey Hoyer - Rheumatology Secretary. Tracey is quite simply a fantastic secretary and whenever I have contacted her she has always been very pleasant, friendly and most importantly patiently listens to what we are saying. She seems to understand when I am worried and goes out of her way to try and help. Throughout the pandemic, understandably

clinics have been reduced and my Mother's face to face Rheumatology appointments have been cancelled and re-arranged by the hospital. We were given a telephone consultation but for various reasons and that my mother was starting to have rheumatoid problems and we felt we required a face to face appointment. Once again, Tracey was very helpful and managed to arrange an appointment for us but the earliest was going to be in 2 months. However, she said she would try to ring us if there were any cancellations. Mum was delighted when she rang a few weeks later and offered us an earlier than planned appointment. We very much appreciated her commitment, caring personal attention, the fact that she had not forgotten about us and for taking the time to ring us. A secretary ringing a patient back may not seem much, but it meant so much to my 79 year old Mother and relieved her anxiety enormously. We wanted to nominate Tracey for this award as we feel that hard working secretaries are often forgotten about. They like all the staff in the hospital, are under a lot of pressure and are the first point of contact for patients who are having problems. We do hope you will be consider Tracey for this award as she is a credit to the trust and Rheumatology team.

Angela Hymers, Staff Nurse, Ward 18 ITU - RVI

1. Angela helped me and family with the knowledge that my mother had the best care that could possibly be provided, we were able to visit Karen Rangecroft in the last hours of her battle with COVID. Angela was in contact regularly and provided details of the condition etc. Her professionalism during this process was at the highest level in many ways. Angela is a professional in her field, more importantly an amazing person.
2. Angela was informative and showed a true caring and compassionate side throughout my wife's care. Karen was admitted to the ward from Carlisle suffering from COVID-19 whenever I called she understood my concerns and did her utmost to put me at ease in a beautiful calming way. Unfortunately, Karen's condition worsens and I was called over to visit, Angela sat me down and discussed her condition and the department machines etc. so that I would not be too alarmed. She gave Karen superb personal care and constantly asked if we required her to do anything else for Karen. On leaving the ward on both Thursday and Saturday after her passing she made me call to confirm my safe arrival home. I know it's Angela's job and you couldn't do the job without the care and compassion but the relentless pace of ITU and Covid-19 in the last 12 months must be unbelievable on her own mind and health. She is an angel, along with all her other colleagues who are also due recognition.

Dr Gail Jones, Consultant Haematologist, Clinical Haematology Speciality - FH

Dr Gail Jones - I have been a Lymphoma patient for over 9 years and Dr Jones has been my consultant. She is a most pleasant person. From a layman's point of view her competence seethes to be excellent. She is authoritative but in no way superior or intimidating when she makes a suggestion she always asks my opinion of it. She is always patient and kind, I place my full confidence in her.

Danielle Jones, Trainee Clinical Psychologist, Psychology - Paed Oncology/ SCIDS

Danielle has been supporting my autistic daughter leading up to dental and ENT surgery. She has continuously gone above and beyond to ensure my daughters treatment has been managed in a way that was sensitive to her needs as an autistic. She has coordinated care between departments, ensured we had named staff, and that those staff were very aware of my daughters People at our heart needs and how they were to be met. She has helped my daughter go from being in complete shutdown at the mention of surgery, to successfully being admitted and having surgery this week. She's ensured staff knew how to engage with my daughter, the topics to mention that would help her trust them to enable to get this done. Importantly for us, she's explained to them the things they couldn't do and how they would affect my daughter's the process. She has provided my daughter with support plans that allow her to follow step by step what has been going to happen, including photos of the staff she will meet and their roles. I'm so happy with the work Danielle has done with my daughter, and the support she's offered me. This week's surgery couldn't have happened without her input.

Tracey McDonald, Staff Nurse, Ward 40 Gynaecology - RVI

I've always been against abortions but as an unexpected pregnancy after having my little boy it was my only option and the right choice for my family. When it happened I got such a shock, I felt horrible. Tracy did not judge, the support and care she gave me was amazing and made me feel like it was ok for this to happen. I don't think I would have got past this experience in life if I didn't have her there with her caring words and kind heart. She really is an asset to your team and I feel she would really deserve People at our heart this award.

Christine Morris, Staff Nurse, Phototherapy Dermatology - RVI

Very professional, caring, helpful always willing to help/advise, whenever possible.

Jenny Underhill, Nurse Specialist - Children & Young People, Laser Room - RVI

1. Jenny made me feel a lot more comfortable about my condition and went out of her way to make sure I recovered properly and quickly. She was very friendly and helpful and explained everything in full detail.
2. My teenage son was admitted to hospital with quite a severe skin infection. He saw Jenny on the second day and I could not believe the difference in his condition. Jenny took time to cleanse his face, treat him and made him feel human again. She was kind, caring, obviously very knowledgeable and had a great sense of humour, which lifted my son's spirits. He also thinks she is marvellous!

Penelope Wilkinson, Healthcare Assistant, Out-Patients NCCC - FH

Penny went above and beyond in helping my Mum on this particular day things were going from bad to worse for my Mum in the department. Mum was very vulnerable and struggles very bad with various ailments and cancer but Penny took care of her, calmed Mum down and seen that she was looked after. I did meet Penny myself and thanked her for her outstanding care and professionalism. This lady is a credit to the NHS and deserves to get recognition. That particular day I could not go with Mum for her treatment and was treat shockingly from the staff in that department and I did complain however, Penny was there for my Mum and I can't thank her enough.

Team Nominees

ENT, Plastics, Ophthalmology & Dermatology Directorate

All Staff on the Photography Department - RVI

Words can't say how caring and professional this department is and the work they have done when I needed their help the most. Many Thanks.

All Staff on the Dermatology Outpatients - RVI

I have been receiving treatment for several months, the whole team are very caring and friendly it was a pleasure to have to go to the department. They are the most informative and considerate people there has not been anytime that I have attended, that I have experienced negativity. They are a fantastic team and if ever a job comes up please can I be a part of it.

Radiology Directorate

All Staff in the Nuclear Medicine Department

The NUTH Nuclear Medicine team is a large MDT who all embody the Trusts values and uphold its vision to the highest standard consistently by providing an excellent service and putting the needs of the patient at the centre of everything they do. They are kind – caring for a whole variety of patients including children, dementia sufferers and oncology patients. Going above and beyond to make the experience pleasant for everyone. They have high standards – Waiting time targets are rarely breached and the results of patient satisfaction surveys are excellent. They are inclusive – The team is truly multidisciplinary, working expertly and cohesively together to deliver the best possible service. The team are always happy to help other departments building effective working relationships throughout the trust. They are innovative – Always improving services, being receptive to change and new technologies means that the department can be a quick adopter of new developments and services. Staff are all striving to develop personally, ongoing continuous professional development is encouraged and facilitated. They are proud –It is an excellent department that consistently delivers high quality, timely and professional results and services. Everyone involved in the provision of the service performs to the best of their ability. Not just for inspection or on occasion but all day every day the team work extremely hard, with compassion and genuine feeling for the patients and for each other and that is why I would like to nominate them for this award.

Surgical Services Directorate

The Endoscopy Dept & The PET Scan Dept, Endoscopy Unit - RVI

All staff in both departments were extra well-mannered and polite. They told me exactly what they were doing I can't remember most of their names so I will just nominate both departments.

All Staff on Ward 6 FH

Their upbeat and friendly attitude made my stay feel like a premium experience, any questions I had they would answer to the best of their abilities and if they did not know the answer, then they would go and find it when they had time. Honestly they were like teachers and friends wrapped in a happy and uplifting package. At the very least these guys should get recognition for a job well done!

Emma Hauxwell, Samantha Baldwin, Deborah Mcardle, Rebecca Kay, Molly Neilson & Lauren (HCA/Nurses), Ward 46 General Surgery - RVI

This is the first time Melanie has been on their ward and hospital and was very anxious and nervous as she required a lot of help, but Mel was cared for with the most dignity and always helped her especially getting washed and changed with having OCD can be a challenge but Debs, Emma and Sam went above and beyond to help her in everything she needed as this can be very daunting as Mel can be stubborn, can try too much and overdo it. When Mel took ill and taken to the ITU we were informed straight away and told the nurses took exceptional care and stayed with her as we did not live local. They went above their call of duty also special thanks to the colorectal and (unreadable) team for helping as much as they did. And thanks to Dan the tea man for being so cheery!

All Staff on Ward 46 General Surgery - RVI

I have been on Ward 46 now for several weeks and also stayed in ITU, during my stay on Ward 46 the Nursing Team have been brilliant nothing is ever too much, if you need anything they will go out of their way to get it for you. All the Nursing Team were fab but the following went above and beyond Emma, Sam, Rebecca, Mollie, Debs, Lauren, Daynor, Niamh, Tracey and Lucy those nurses have really made me feel really at ease and helped me get through this difficult stay, as this hospital is not my local one so I was nervous. If these Nurses were in the Olympics they would win gold every time 1st place, other Nursing Staff should take a leaf out of their book and the NHS should be a better place. Emma for Sister and Comedian.

All Staff on the Breast Surgery Speciality - RVI

The breast oncological team deserve the People at our Heart Award for delivering some outstanding care that I needed in October/November 2020 following my breast cancer diagnosis. This was a particularly difficult time for me and a time where I felt very vulnerable and exposed. I was made to feel safe and in good hands and witnessed how Mr Critchley and his wider team arranged timely diagnostics over a 4 week period to determine and accurately diagnose me which enabled my surgery to be planned well and efficiently. I was supported by so many people along the pathway including the breast screening service, radiology staff and specialist breast care nurses all of whom ensured I understood the information and helped me reach an informed decision on my care whilst supporting me through this difficult journey. They told me that they were 'just doing their job' but to be on the receiving end of this was humbling and at times overwhelming. I was blown away by kindness and compassion whilst observing true professionalism. On the day of my surgical procedure Mr Critchley and his ward team (W45) and theatre team cared for me in such a way to make me feel at ease at a time when I felt very nervous. My diagnostic pathway was a personally difficult journey but I witnessed just how amazing the teams collaborated in order to produce the amazing care I received. I am truly thankful and grateful for all the team have

done for me and feel they so greatly deserve this award. The team are a credit to Newcastle Hospitals and our wonderful NHS.

Women's Services Directorate

All Staff in the Fertility Clinic - CFL (Reproductive Medicine - CFL)

Being diagnosed with cancer at the age of 30 is scary, knowing I needed chemotherapy and faced losing my fertility was heart-breaking. Especially as we had planned to give our 2 year old daughter a sibling this year. My oncologist put an urgent referral through to the clinic, given it was over the Christmas period I did not expect to hear anything. However, after receiving my referral the clinic arranged an appointment with a consultant pretty much straight away, given it was Christmas this was such a relief! I received a phone call from Jan the same day booking us in for our first appointment. We were fortunate enough to complete two rounds of IVF and were able to freeze an amazing 6 embryos. Throughout our experience with the fertility clinic, all the staff have been amazing consultants, nurses, healthcare assistants, sisters, embryologists; everyone that we had the pleasure of meeting were nothing but friendly, professional, compassionate, understanding and could not have done more for us. All staff answered any questions we had, called us when they said they would with updates and were transparent throughout this whole process. From myself and my husband, we would love for the fertility clinic to receive an award and be recognised for the truly incredible work they do on a daily basis and for giving couples the precious 'gift of life'. We've never come across a team of professionals as dedicated as they are. THANK YOU!