



Welcome,

The NHS up and down the country faces increased demand for services, staffing challenges and pressure to balance the books. It is no different on the Isle of Wight – where we have been working incredibly hard to improve the quality of the services we provide while recruiting and improving our financial performance.

It is a big job and when we get busy it is very easy for people to focus on what's right in front of them and to forget the bigger picture. This is where leaders need to step up and show their teams just how important it is to take time to reflect on our success.

The power of saying thank you to people cannot be underestimated and it's something that I and the rest of the Executive Team want to see more of at our Trust. I was delighted to see that members of staff from all sorts of roles in a huge variety of services were recognised for their contribution this month.

First, in a Celebration of Learning event marking the achievements of people who have undertaken training, education or learning over the last year. I would like to say a huge thank you to all of those recognised. Your dedication and hard work is a big part of what makes our organisation so special.

This brings me, secondly, onto our Unsung Hero Awards. We ran a Trust-wide campaign to promote them and I was thrilled to learn that more than 270 nominations came in, from staff, patients and members of the public. It certainly gave the judges a difficult job to do.

There was an inspiring awards ceremony and a week of visits around the Trust, to say thank you to teams and to learn more about their important roles. You can find out more about the Awards, who was shortlisted and who won by [clicking here](#).



Michael Owers, winner of the Making a Difference Award



Sheelagh Holme, winner of the Lifetime Achievement Award

I would just like to add a personal thank you to each and every person who took the time to nominate a colleague.

Pausing for just a moment to let someone know that you value their work and support can have such a powerful and positive impact.

That's why we will be re-launching our Employee of the Month programme, which will be open to individuals and to teams from across the organisation.

And very soon we will be kicking off the planning for a new, revamped staff achievement awards which will be held in 2020.

Best wishes,

Maggie Oldham
Chief Executive
Isle of Wight NHS Trust

'Wonderful caring people'

Thank you for the kind comments about the thank you letter I shared with you last month, a lot of people told me it had lifted their spirits. So I thought I would share some more of the feedback I get. Among the many thank you letters I receive this letter stood out for me. I especially liked to read that a member of staff had treated a distressed patient as if he were her own father. I couldn't ask for more than that from anyone.

Dear Ms Oldham,

It gives me great pleasure to write, at a time when people are complaining of just about everything these days, a sincere letter of thanks and appreciation to the staff involved in my care during my recent stay in St. Mary's Hospital.

On Sept 27th I had been decorating our flat when suddenly my left leg gave way and became paralysed. I was rushed by a neighbour, who suspected that I was having a stroke, to the A&E Dept. of St. Mary's. I never found out her name, but the young lady who was on reception that morning was a model of efficiency and immediacy (I have been in numerous A&E departments over the years where the attention was anything but!).

I was rushed to the Resus Ward where I was given various tests, a CT scan and a chest x-ray. These were all impressively expedited within a very short space of time. The doctors, however, were mystified that only my left leg had been affected, nothing else, and that the infarct had happened on the left side of my brain, not the right. With confirmation that I had had a stroke I was admitted to the Hyper Acute Stroke Unit. Over the next three days I experienced the most wonderful, professional care imaginable from various people, and I would like you to pass on my profuse thanks, and with a copy of this letter placed on their personal files.

I did not manage to get all the names of the staff involved on the stroke ward, but I would like to especially thank Senior Nurse Iris Garcia, who was on duty during the night shifts, and who showed me such wonderful care and attention to my every need and request. Nothing was too much trouble, right down to finding me a number of blankets to combat the freezing air conditioning which blasted out every night. She really was the very epitome of everything that a patient could ever hope for when experiencing such a traumatic event. I cannot praise her enough. She is a very real credit and asset to St Mary's who should be very proud of her. I also want to thank HCA's Jo Reed and Irina Wilkes who also gave me some lovely care and attention on that ward. They too are a credit to the hospital. I'd like also to thank Kerri Jackson from Physio who went the extra mile for me and gave me excellent care and advice, so that I was able to leave hospital on 2nd October without the need for artificial aides.

On Sept 30th I was transferred to the rehab ward, which I shared with men suffering from a variety of stroke conditions. It was there that I was privileged to observe some of the most beautiful acts of care and compassion I have seen, anywhere. One elderly man, was in a permanent state of distress and anxiety. The first morning I watched nurse Debbie Pringle dispense the morning medications and then come back and hold his hand and stroke his forehead with gentle words of comfort. This she did for quite some time, and she managed to calm and soothe him. I can't imagine such compassion can ever be taught in nurse training school. It seemed to come right from her heart, and I was extremely impressed by her standard of caring, attentive and compassionate nursing.

Another person I'd like to bring to your attention for her dedication to patients was Debbie Ryan, who in fact was one of the cleaning ladies. That title does not do her justice, because on my second morning in the ward I watched her do her duties whilst hearing a patient cry of distress, which we both commented on. I hope I won't get her into trouble when I tell you that she left her dusting mop and went to his side, held his hand and spent the next fifteen minutes gently talking to him, with such gentleness and compassion that he could have been her own father. I was truly astonished, and I confess that I had a lump in my throat! Again, in Debbie you have a very asset and ambassador for St. Mary's.

I have now returned home and am making slow but steady progress in walking and regaining my strength, but more than that, it has given me great pleasure to tell my friends and family about the truly excellent care that I experienced at your hospital. I am aware from media reports etc. that St. Mary's does not always get a good press, and I could see that like many hospitals you could do with more staff, but I wanted to let you know that you have some wonderful caring people working for you. Please let them know that I appreciated them very much.

Freedom to Speak Up Month

Celebrating staff and recognising success is an important part of creating a positive culture in an organisation – so too is supporting one another to raise concerns.

October is National “Speak Up October” month and a good chance to remind people of the importance of raising concerns if you are worried about patient safety or issues with lack of training, staffing levels or behaviours.

I want to reassure everyone at the Trust that speaking up is nothing to be fearful of. We are totally focused on improving our services and if you have a concern that could help us to improve, then we’d like to know about it. We need to ensure we have an open and honest culture where people are appropriately supported when they speak up and that we learn from our mistakes.

If you have a concern that you are unable to discuss with your line manager or clinical supervisor please remember the Trust’s Freedom To Speak Up Guardian is there to support you with any concerns.

Information about speaking up is available on the intranet and through E Bulletin but if you would like more information or would like someone to come and talk to your teams about raising concerns please contact Leisa Gardiner, Freedom To Speak Up Guardian leisa.gardiner@iow.nhs.uk.