

PRESS RELEASE – August 15, 2018

Compassion of stroke staff at Sunderland hospital earns shortlisting for national award



The Acute Stroke Unit at Sunderland Royal Hospital is celebrating being chosen as a finalist in the prestigious Kate Granger Awards for Compassionate Care.

The awards are dedicated to Dr Kate Granger who sadly passed away in July 2016. It was while undergoing treatment for cancer that Dr Granger started writing about seeing the NHS 'through the eyes of a patient'. She launched the #hellomynameis campaign, which became globally recognised, and she worked tirelessly to raise awareness around compassion in the NHS and encourage all health and care staff, whatever their role, wherever they work, to deliver care with compassion, recognising the individual and their care needs.

The Acute Stroke Unit, which cares for patients from South Tyneside as well as Sunderland, is shortlisted for the Team Award for its 'All about me' boards, which it has introduced to improve communication between patients, their families and carers, and health professionals. Around a third of stroke survivors experience

difficulties with communication which can be challenging and upsetting for everyone involved. Many stroke survivor patients with communication problems say that they sometimes feel invisible.

The Acute Stroke Unit at Sunderland Royal already had 'All about me' booklets in which patients' personal details such as likes and dislikes and preferred name can be recorded. Sister Debbie Hindmarsh wanted to expand upon this initiative and City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust's Service Improvement team helped the unit to develop the 'All about me' boards.

The nursing team encourage families, carers and friends to use the large boards to display photographs, draw pictures, write messages and capture personal information which can help staff to respond to patients' individual needs and provide more personalised care. Feedback from patients and their loved ones has been extremely positive, with many saying they appreciate the personal touch at such a difficult time and that the colourful boards have created long-lasting, positive memories for them.

Melanie Johnson, Executive Director of Nursing, Allied Health Professionals and Patient Experience, said: "This award nomination for our Acute Stroke Unit is fully deserved. The 'All about me' board is a simple, low cost but extremely effective visible communication tool which has a very positive impact on the experience of patients and their families. The board supports staff in understanding the patient's identity as an individual first and as a patient second by giving them invaluable information about the person, and what is important to them, which they may not otherwise have known."

The initiative is being considered for introduction in other departments at Sunderland Royal, including dementia and paediatric care. St Benedict's Hospice and Centre for Specialist Palliative Care in Sunderland, which is run by City Hospitals Sunderland NHS Foundation Trust's partner, South Tyneside NHS Foundation Trust, has also expressed interest in exploring its possibilities.

The winners of the Kate Granger Awards for Compassionate Care will be announced at the Health and Care Innovation Expo in Manchester on Wednesday 5 September.

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Photo caption: Left to right, Sunderland Royal Acute Stroke Unit Matron Su Lindsay and Sister Debbie Hindmarsh, and Continuous Improvement Facilitator Fiona Carney with one of the 'All about me' boards

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