



### **Dementia companion in the running for national award**

A Dementia companion in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust has been nominated for a national award for her tireless work helping patients living with dementia.

Mary Jackson has been nominated in the Inspirational Clinical Support Worker of the Year award in the Our Health Heroes Award.

Mary has been working in South Tyrone Hospital for 10 years, firstly as a Health Care Assistant but 18 months ago became the Trust's first dementia companion.

Trust Dementia Companions work in our hospitals and assist patients, encouraging independence as appropriate, supporting them with their rehabilitation programme, and always respecting their privacy and dignity.

Despite having only been in the role a short time, Mary truly understands how to engage with dementia sufferers in a meaningful way.

Mairead McGahan, Service Improvement Lead for Dementia, said:

“Mary is an exceptionally kind, compassionate and creative person who has a passion for working with people with Dementia. She creates a warm, safe environment for people in her care. Mary takes time to acknowledge and use the skills of the person and their life experiences to enhance social contact and supports people to have a sense of purpose and routine through meaningful activities. We are incredibly lucky to have her.”

Shane Devlin, Chief Executive of the Southern Health and Social Care Trust, said:

“The Dementia Service is a relatively new team within the Southern Trust and Mary was our first Dementia Companion, she is a natural leader amongst her peers, offering advice, support and guidance particularly to new starters.

“Often the work of the Dementia Service can be reactive and unrelenting, Mary works effectively under pressure despite challenging circumstances, prioritising work for the optimum benefit of the people under her care.

“Mary is an exceptional member of the team who always leads by example; she has a strong value base ensuring that patients’ wishes are at the centre of everything our amazing Dementia team does. Her colleagues really enjoy working with her and I can think of no one more deserving of this award.”

Our Health Heroes Awards 2022 is delivered by [Skills for Health](#). To vote for Mary in the Inspirational Clinical Support Worker of the Year Award visit: <https://bit.ly/3FYSK0a>

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