



Healthcare support employee of the year award

This award will be presented to a support worker in our clinical services and is open to health care assistants, therapy assistants, housekeepers and other non-qualified clinical staff. It recognises individuals who have excelled in their role and delivered high quality services that make a real difference to service users and their carers. He/she will have shown compassion, dedication and commitment to improving quality, which could include using coaching techniques.

The shortlisted candidates are:

Diane Smyth, support worker, HMP Holme House, Stockton on Tees

Diane is a strong, knowledgeable and determined advocate for the men she works with at Holme House Prison. She gives them time and understanding as well as escalating their concerns to the appropriate people to give them the best possible chance of recovery. She helped set up the Hearing Voices Support Group, which gives the men chance to spend time with people with similar experiences in a relaxed, informal environment. Her down-to-earth approach means that many of the men initiate conversations with her which is a huge step for them. Diane also cares for the men's physical wellbeing and has trained to provide acupuncture, allowing them the opportunity to experience calm and quiet. She is the embodiment of what a caring, compassionate and innovative mental health worker should be and is an absolute team player.

Michelle Blenko, support worker, Darlington Police Station, Darlington

Michelle has consistently demonstrated excellence in patient centred care and exceeded the expectations of her role to provide the best possible support to service users. Her commitment to fulfilling her role and putting the service users at the heart of everything she does has been recognised by managers, service users and carers. Michelle works with service users in the criminal justice system who are often difficult to engage with and have lost hope in the 'system'. Michelle works with them to identify their needs and how best they can be met. She works across the Trust and with different professionals and is always an advocate for service users. In team meetings and service development events, she always brings the focus back to the needs of the service user. Michelle has also taken on the role of Carers Champion and has done a wonderful job promoting the need to involve carers in care planning and recognising the challenges they face.

Jean Croft, healthcare assistant, Eastfield Clinic, Scarborough

Jean supports people who have a learning disability and associated health needs. She has been working alongside a service user who was diagnosed with cancer and has shown real compassion and understanding to ensure they received appropriate treatment. She worked with the service user, the hospital team, social care and family to ensure they understood her illness, diagnosis, treatment options and she could develop her own treatment plan. Jean attended all the service user's appointments to make sure she could raise any queries. She coordinated tests on the same day to reduce stress and anxiety and supported the service user throughout their surgery. The hospital recognised her work in improving their understanding of supporting patients with a learning disability and this will help others with special needs in the future.

Patricia Brown, community support worker, Princess Road Clinic, Malton

"A breath of fresh air" is how people describe Trish when they first meet her. She has a natural ability to engage with the most complex people and is often asked to mentor colleagues in care homes and private care agencies, to demonstrate how to engage and support with an individual's care needs. She never gives up and always thinks of alternative ways to get a positive outcome. Her determination and commitment have helped avoid hospital admission for a number of service users. Trish believes if a person can be supported at home, they should be, and she has the courage to speak out and make a difference if she feels someone's voice is not being heard. She is also a smoking cessation champion and has supported service users to quit. Trish oozes kindness, warmth, compassion and care and is the backbone of her team. She is always willing to support in anything she is asked to do.