**Integrity to the Value and Purpose**

**Rosario Walshe, Senior Charge Nurse, Ward A31, Forth Valley Royal Hospital**

I’m Rosario Walshe and I have been nursing for 30 years. I was born in Tullamore in County Offaly, Ireland and now live in Denny. I worked as an auxiliary nurse in the former RSNH before attending the former Falkirk Nursing College where I trained and worked in both Falkirk and Stirling before moving to Forth Valley Royal Hospital to become SCN for Ward A31 – a general medical ward which has also developed an infectious diseases service.

The main challenges I found was facing something I’ve never faced before and the uncertainty of not knowing the scale of what we would have to deal with. However, I’ve also learned loads and we have a really strong multidisciplinary team which learns and works well together. The team spirit has been fantastic and we have been supporting each other to help us get through this. The lows have been when we have lost a patient although thankfully most people do recover.

Restricted visiting has also been a challenge as it is difficult not to speak to relatives face-to-face and for patients to spend time in hospital without seeing their friends and family. The highs have been the support from the public – I didn’t realise until now just how much the public were behind us and how much the value the services and support the NHS provides.

The staff have been fantastic throughout this pandemic – they have been really flexible and gone above and beyond - whether it is working extra shifts, changing their own shifts and plans and making themselves available to do whatever is needed. They have also supported the patients – thinking of things to bring in for them and little things which will cheer them up. They have been using postcards to pass messages between patients and their families, using ipads and whiteboards to help communicate.

We are also looking at ways in the ward that we can celebrate the patients who have recovered and gone home as well as remember those who have sadly passed away. It’s been a privilege to have had the opportunity to work with the media over the last few weeks to raise awareness of some of the work we have been doing in the hospital.

I don’t normally like being in the spotlight but I’m delighted at the feedback and my daughter Shannon, who works in the Children’s Ward at Forth Valley Royal Hospital, thinks it’s fantastic. I am very proud to be a nurse and very proud of all my colleagues who are continuing to support each other during this pandemic.

