More staff for local team

Additional staff and new roles created to keep more people happy and healthy at home.

As part of the implementation of Your Future Care, the Seaton, Axminster and Sidmouth health and care team has gained additional nurses, therapists and support workers - increasing the team’s staffing levels by a quarter. One of the new roles introduced is Associate Community Matron, a dedicated senior nurse who works primarily to prevent hospital admissions by supporting people to stay safely in their own environment.

Emma Thomas, one of two associate matrons working in the locality, explains: “My colleague Steph and I provide a vital link between community and acute care, working closely with occupational therapists, physiotherapists, social services, support workers and GPs. We look at every aspect of a person’s life which enables us to work in partnership with the person and other professionals to help them back to health, hopefully without the need to go into hospital. We carry-out assessments in the home as it’s really valuable that we can understand how someone lives and the potential risks or barriers which we can then work to resolve.

The other side of our role involves us going to the acute hospital to liaise with nursing and therapy staff to support a timely discharge for people who no longer require acute care and would benefit more from being supported to regain and maintain their usual level of independence at home. It’s really important that patients and their carers or relatives feel supported through this process and we do this in a number of ways. Some may only require a one-off home visit to ensure that everything is in place; others may need daily monitoring to ensure that they progress back to good health. We continuously assess people's needs and work with our social care colleagues on long term solutions to any care needs that people may have once they are back to optimum health.

I really enjoy my role as I get to use my nursing skills in a way that minimises the need for people to be in an acute hospital bed. Hospitals can be noisy and confusing environments and for some of our older or more vulnerable patients this can have lasting negative consequences. They can also be a long way from home for some people and this can make it difficult for regular visitors which may add to the feeling of isolation. Instead, people who may have traditionally gone to a community hospital now get the chance to recuperate at home, surrounded by the people and things they love and are familiar with. People who can be supported at home have the added benefit of their own GP involvement. GPs know their patients really well which is a valuable link when trying to get people better. We also have a geriatrician (a specialist consultant in the care of older people) to call upon when we’re managing more complex conditions.

I also love the fact that we are working in partnership with people and their relatives. It’s a real privilege to be welcomed into their homes and whilst we bring skills and expertise to help them, ultimately they’re in charge. I am really lucky that I get to play a part in helping people to be at home and see the positive effect it has on their wellbeing. There really is no bed like your own bed.”

100% RECOMMENDED

We have been gathering feedback directly from people who have received short-term care from our Urgent Community Response team, supporting them to keep well at home or following a stay in hospital. In December 2017, 100% of those interviewed said they would recommend the service to others, an increase from 89% in November. Understanding peoples’ experience is important to us as it helps us to know what is working well and what could be improved. Please get in touch if you would like to share your feedback of the service.

COMFORT FUNDS PRESIDENT RETIRES

Sidmouth Victoria Hospital Comfort Funds’ President Sheelagh Michelmore MBE is retiring after 63 years of dedicated service to the charity. Sheelagh, a Trustee since 1955 and President since 2000, has overseen the transformation of Sidmouth Victoria Hospital through countless fundraisers and appeals. Her contribution and commitment to the hospital and the community has been invaluable. We wish her a very happy and well-deserved retirement.
Top award for Nicky!

Nicky Skinner scoops Team Leader of the Year (Adult Social Care) at Social Worker Awards

Social work manager Nicky, who is part of the Seaton, Axminster and Sidmouth community health and care team, was praised by the Social Worker of the Year awards judges for her outstanding dedication, skill and person-centred focus when handling complex cases. The award recognises individuals who show exceptional leadership skills and this was evidenced by colleagues who nominated her for her calmness under pressure, wisdom and ability to empower and support staff. Nicky was presented with her award by patron Lorraine Pascale, Celebrity Chef at the award ceremony in December 2017. Commenting on the award, Nicky said: “It feels great to win this award. Just to be nominated was enough for me, but to actually win makes me so proud. I’ve been a social worker for almost 30 years and it’s just one of the best jobs in the world. I’ve loved every minute.”