



Linda Rose

Head of Nursing and Patient Experience

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What is your job title, what does it involve day-to-day and how long have you been working in that role and/or at the Trust?

I am a Registered Mental Health Nurse by profession and I'm now Head of Nursing and Patient Experience. I've been in this post for nearly six months but I've worked for the Trust since 1987. No two days are ever the same in my role and it's a real challenge. It involves me having oversight of complaints, compliments and the PALS service, providing professional advice and supervision, authoring policies and procedures, representing the organisation internally and externally with community partners, and chairing forums amongst a big range of other issues that require real-time responsiveness. Most importantly my role is about the provision of nursing leadership and using those skills to ensure that as colleagues and as an organisation, we make a positive impact on improving the quality of life for every patient and family that uses our services.

Why did you choose to work for the NHS?

I truly believe that nursing was in my blood. My mother came to the UK from Jamaica in 1962 to train as a Registered General Nurse. Learning to adapt to life in the UK wasn't an easy journey for her. Many like her came here to support the NHS through an agreement as part of the commonwealth community. We know that the beginning of the NHS, raised the principles of promoting equality, but I know from mum's experience that as a pupil nurse (who had applied to be a student) that she had to fight for equality right from the start. She's now worked for the NHS for over 50 years and still loves it. We can't get her to retire!

That kind of dedication rubbed off on me at an early age. I was born in Leeds on the same day as the birth of the NHS...but not the same year! As a young single mother I started my first job as a care assistant for Age Concern. I worked with people living with dementia and this became my link to working for the NHS. I was lucky enough to come across two authoritative and kind female leaders who recognised my potential and supported me to apply for nurse training. I've continued to work for the NHS ever since within the specialism of mental health nursing and I never looked back. Working in the NHS can be hard to navigate sometimes, but on the whole I've had an extremely

rewarding career just by caring for people.

What's your favourite part about your job?

Quite simply, the reason I came into nursing in the first place was for the people. Much of what I do has an impact on the lives and experiences of the service users and I'm proud to say that I work with many caring, compassionate and experienced colleagues. When I'm able to spend time in the services to have conversations with people, it helps to provide me with insights that help to tell us where we are doing well and where we need to make improvements. I do appreciate good evidence, but that isn't always about research and paper trails, sometimes it's about hearing and learning in real time.

What's the most challenging part about your job?

Difficult decisions. I'm not afraid to say that I've stepped on a few toes in my career. This isn't an easy feat for anyone but I can say from my own experience as a female, black leader, that in the past it has been a bit lonely and some parts of my journey have felt intimidating. However, these decisions have always been for the right reasons and that's to make sure we provide good care for everyone regardless of cultural backgrounds, and that our staff are supported even if they make mistakes. I think as an organisation we're taking the right steps to help everyone to feel equally part of a good organisation. I take my position as a positive role model very seriously, and if demonstrating courage is what that takes to help people make the right decisions for patients and services, then that really matters to me and I feel supported with this.

Tell us about:

a time you were really proud of your work

It's a while since I worked in clinical services but a few months ago, I came across someone I'd nursed about 20 years ago. She told me that she would never forget me because I treated her with kindness and compassion when she was in a really difficult place.

your fondest memory of working at the Trust

My fondest memory would be of working with a particular male nurse - as a role model, he was regarded as a bit of a rebel. I remember him getting rid of 'staff toilets and staff cups'. He was making a point that we are all people and should treat each other the way we'd like to be treated ourselves.

What do our values of integrity, simplicity and caring mean to you? How do you show these values in the work that you do?

I believe the basic principles of treating each other kindly and respectfully matter. My strength is being able to listen and help people to be solution focused. I often give people positive feedback as I think that is what helps to grow a positive learning environment, but as I said...if I see something unacceptable, I will challenge it.

What message would you give to inspire the future NHS workforce in your area of work or in general?

Time set aside for reflection is a really important aspect of mental health and learning disability nursing. The reality is that we are all stretched and reflection is often put on the back burner. It helps to do both a good job and look after your own health and wellbeing, a tool I'd really recommend you prioritise. It really does work!

How has the NHS made a difference to you and how have you seen the NHS help people?

I've seen many positive changes and developments over the last 30 years but one of the most important changes to me is that the decision making in mental health and learning disability care is moving away from being prescribed by a professional and is moving towards involvement led by the patient. This helps to make sure that when we say 'person centred care' - it's just that.