

Alison Hatton

In the run up to International Nurses' Day (12th May), we speak to one of our own specialist nurses Alison Hatton, senior sister on the Oncology & Haematology day unit, who has been instrumental in improving chemotherapy treatment at our hospital.



Can you tell us more about your role at the Trust?

I am the senior sister on the Oncology & Haematology day unit at Weston General Hospital where patients receive chemotherapy.

We pride ourselves on looking after patients at what can be a very stressful time.

Alison Hatton (above)

How did you identify a way to improve our patients' experience of chemotherapy?

You may already be aware that chemotherapy is a cancer treatment where medication is used to kill cancer cells.

Some chemotherapy needs to be given through a peripherally inserted central catheter (PICC). I have been placing PICC's for the last ten years in an extended nursing role.

Last year I became aware that there was exciting new equipment available to make the insertion process a lot safer, more accurate and negate the need for a post insertion chest x-ray to confirm the position.

Can you tell us how you went about introducing the new equipment?

Obtaining the equipment was challenging! Firstly, I had to write a business case and submit that to the Trust charitable fund board.

While in principle everyone agreed this was an excellent venture, it was recommended that we consider other avenues for the funding and I was pointed in various directions.

Finally, I had the opportunity to present my business case to the hospital medical group – and it was accepted!

Did you face any other challenges introducing the new equipment?

It was quite a challenge to complete all the necessary training to use the new equipment – however, this process has now been completed and I and another nurse from the Oncology team are now fully competent at using the 3CG technology, which is now used to insert and confirm the position of all of our PICCS.

What difference will the new equipment make for our patients?

Chemotherapy can be a stressful, difficult time for people. By using the new technology to refine and improve how the treatment is delivered, we're improving our patient's experience of care as well as reducing their x-ray exposure.

We're one of the first Trusts to use this technology to improve our PICC placement practice and we should be really proud of that. Our patient safety and well-being is at the centre of our ethos and any advancement in practice which improves their experience is what we continually strive to achieve.

I'd also like to thank Weston Area Health NHS Trust for their support – it was only with their faith and backing that we've had the opportunity to use this new technology.

With International Nurses Day approaching, do you think nurses need to be recognised more for their work?

I'm extremely proud of my profession. Nurse's work so hard, but we aren't always great at vocalising our achievements. International Nurses' Day is a great opportunity to celebrate nursing success.

I also think that many people are aware of the day-to-day care work that nurses deliver, and appreciate and value that, but perhaps they don't always recognise the extra effort we make to innovate and drive improvements in healthcare for our patients.

I hope International Nurses' Day can help shine more of a light on the many forward-thinking nurses who are quietly making real differences to people's lives.

Alison Hatton is the senior sister on the Oncology & Haematology day unit at Weston Area Health NHS Trust.

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