



### **Trust dementia companion scoops national award**

A dementia companion in the Southern Health and Social Care Trust has won a national award for her tireless work helping patients living with dementia.

Mary Jackson was crowned the Inspirational Clinical Support Worker of the Year, at the Our Health Heroes Awards, for her dedication & compassion working as a Dementia Companion.

Despite having only been in her role for 18 months, Mary truly understands how to engage with those living with dementia in a meaningful way, which is why she scooped nearly 60% of the public vote.

Mary has worked at South Tyrone Hospital for 10 years and prior to her working as a Dementia Companion, she worked as a Health Care Assistant.

Speaking at a glittering Awards ceremony held on Thursday 24 March at the Science Museum in London, Mary said she was “totally overwhelmed”.

“I wasn’t expecting it at all. It’s mind-blowing to be a part of this awards – everyone nominated is so deserving,” she said.

Trust Dementia Companions work in the hospital and assist patients, encouraging independence as appropriate, supporting them with their rehabilitation programme, and always respecting their privacy and dignity.

Mairead McGahan, Service Improvement Lead for Dementia, said: “Mary is an exceptionally kind, compassionate and creative person who has a passion for working with people with Dementia. She creates a warm, safe environment for people in her care. Mary takes time to acknowledge and use the skills of the person and their life experiences to enhance social contact and supports people to have a sense of purpose and routine through meaningful activities. We are incredibly lucky to have her and are delighted that her efforts have been recognised.”

Brian Beattie, Interim Director of Older People and Primary Care said:

“Mary is an exceptional member of the team who always leads by example; she has a strong value base ensuring that patients’ wishes are at the centre of everything our amazing Dementia team does. Her colleagues really enjoy working with her and I can think of no one more deserving of this award.”