



Breast cancer nurse survivor wins national award

A Peterborough City Hospital nurse, who successfully completed her nursing degree apprenticeship despite battling breast cancer, has won a national Our Health Heroes award for the Breakthrough Apprentice of the Year category.

Sharon Maywood received the devastating news that she had been diagnosed with breast cancer, but was also studying to complete a degree apprenticeship course to become a gastroenterology nurse.

Upon receiving the prestigious award Sharon said: "To be recognised and celebrated is very humbling. We've all worked hard the last couple of years, but it always nice to be recognised for the hard work you put in."

Sharon originally worked in accounting for years, but decided to have a complete career change when she turned 40 and become a nurse. She started as a Healthcare Assistant on Ward A10 at Peterborough City Hospital and joined the Nursing Associate pilot scheme in January 2017 before qualifying in January 2019. She then went on to top up her qualification as a nurse and qualified in February 2021 with no debt and a wealth of experience.

However, part way through her course in 2018, Sharon was diagnosed with breast cancer. Undeterred she took the brave decision to carry on with her studies, refusing to take a single day off, despite undergoing intensive cancer treatment. Against all the odds, Sharon qualified as a nurse earlier this year with an impressive pass mark of 81%.

Sharon continues: "Whilst training, I had a separate personal battle due to an illness in 2018, so I juggled my work with my treatment and the staff around me have been so supportive. A10 are a great team to work with, but my mentors Tanya and Rachel really have been fantastic."

The support that Sharon received from Anglia Ruskin University and North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust were crucial to getting her through the toughest of times and her colleagues couldn't be prouder.

Jo Bennis, Chief Nurse for North West Anglia NHS Foundation Trust, said: "I am so pleased that Sharon has received this award. I am incredibly proud of her for everything that she has achieved over the last few years. She has grabbed every opportunity and despite personal illness, has continued to juggle her studies and work and achieve her qualifications. She is a fantastic role model for anyone considering a career in nursing."