

OUR ROLE MODELS



We are committed to creating an inclusive environment by striving to build a workforce which is valued and whose diversity reflects the communities it serves.



The Trust believes that this commitment will lead to improved services for our patients and greater equality of opportunity for our staff. By showcasing our role models the Trust is able to provide real life examples of where staff have accomplished their goals and strived to better themselves professionally and personally. It is hoped this will act as motivation and inspiration for all of our staff to do the same.



We believe that our environment should be supportive and that everyone is valued equally and treated with dignity and respect. Our role models campaign looks not only to celebrate our diverse workforce and the contribution our staff make, but to show and encourage others to have the confidence to shine and progress in their career here.



To do this, we offered our staff the opportunity to come forward and tell us their story of why they would like to be a role model for others. Please take a moment to read these stories, which tell of their career and the challenges that they have faced getting to where they are today.



They wanted to inspire you to know that "I can do it – so can you."



To find out more about workforce inclusion initiatives and staff networks, contact: Sally.lawson@heartofengland.nhs.uk



**"If I can do it,
so can you!"**



ROLE: INTERIM DEPUTY CEO

Kevin started his career in the NHS at the age of 20, working in East Birmingham Hospital (now known as Heartlands), as an Auxiliary. After three months, he applied for training at East Birmingham School of Nursing and after three years, became a qualified Nurse.

"When trained, I started off here on ward 26 as a Staff Nurse and then moved into respiratory and acute medicine. I was offered the opportunity to do an MBA, in those days, opportunities were not as broad as they are now.

After completing the MBA, Kevin moved to working with the Infectious Diseases Department, in the 'Fever Block' as it was then known. Plans were made to open an Emergency Department (ED) and Kevin was moved to manage this project. Once the service was up and running, he stepped up to Directorate Manager. In 2000, Kevin took a Group Manager role at University Hospitals Birmingham (UHB). Within a year he had been promoted to Director of Operations at the Selly Oak and QE sites.

"My next step was to step up again to Deputy Chief Operating Officer, a Trust wide role and remit. One of the biggest challenges was to be responsible for the move to the new QE Hospital. This included the plans for us to actually get in there and making sure it worked."

In 2013, his role changed to Director of Strategic Operations, giving more of a balance between internal and external. UHB started international programmes of work along with the 'buddying' programme. This focused on providing support, direction and plans to other NHS trusts across the country.

December 2015 saw Kevin return to Heartlands, where his career had started, but this time it wasn't on a ward – it was as Interim Deputy CEO. On returning, Kevin said "It was great coming back. After 17 years, I still recognised many faces from the teams I'd worked with when I started. This role gives me the privilege to influence care from a different perspective and environment."

Equality to Kevin is pretty straightforward. Everyone should have the same opportunities, no matter what background. "If an opportunity presents, take it. If you want an opportunity, look for it. If you work hard and put that commitment in, you will get there."





ROLE: EMERGENCY DEPARTMENT SOFTWARE SUPPORT MANAGER

Lisa served as an IT Contractor in the Royal Air Force for 12 years until joining Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust in 2014.

Leaving the Royal Air Force was a huge decision for Lisa to make as it was a complete change in direction to step into the Information Technology sector. In her role as Emergency Department Software Support Manager, Lisa works on the software that tracks the patients through the department and records their clinical information as they go.

Lisa came out as a Transgender woman in 2009 and has been living full time as a woman since 2014. Lisa has been on Hormone treatment since 2015 and is expecting to have gender reassignment surgery next year.

"My biggest personal challenge to date has to be that whilst I was working in the IT department for the Trust, I decided to start my transition. It was a very scary time for me with the prospect of all the unknowns that I faced.

"All of the managers and staff I have encountered, both at the time and to this day, have all been very supportive and encouraged and reassured me to do what I felt was right. I am pleased to be involved in writing policies that will help and support others like myself in the Trust."

Lisa says that "equality is more than just being treated the same, it's more about being able to be yourself without fear or prejudice. Believe in yourself and what others think, say or do to you becomes less important."

As far as being a role model goes, Lisa is hoping that others will take inspiration from her story and openness. Lisa is looking forward to working with the Rainbow Friends to give individuals the confidence to be true to themselves and free from confidence issues.



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ROLE: ADVANCED PRACTITIONER RADIOLOGY

Sarah worked in a bar before watching Casualty on television and deciding that she wanted to work in a hospital. The only job available was a band 2 radiographic assistant in a hospital in Lancashire.

After applying for the job, Sarah was initially declined. What followed was a phone call to ask her if she would accept a job that had been created just for her.

"I love learning and I don't think that will ever stop. That is what makes me such an ambitious person with a real passion for radiography. I am competitive too which helps me. Outside of work I am a keen netball player and I am captain of the team."

A year later, Sarah took a gamble and moved to Birmingham. In October 2003, Sarah started her new job here as a band 3 radiographic assistant. A few months after that, Sarah took an opportunity with the University to enrol on a trainee assistant practitioner course.

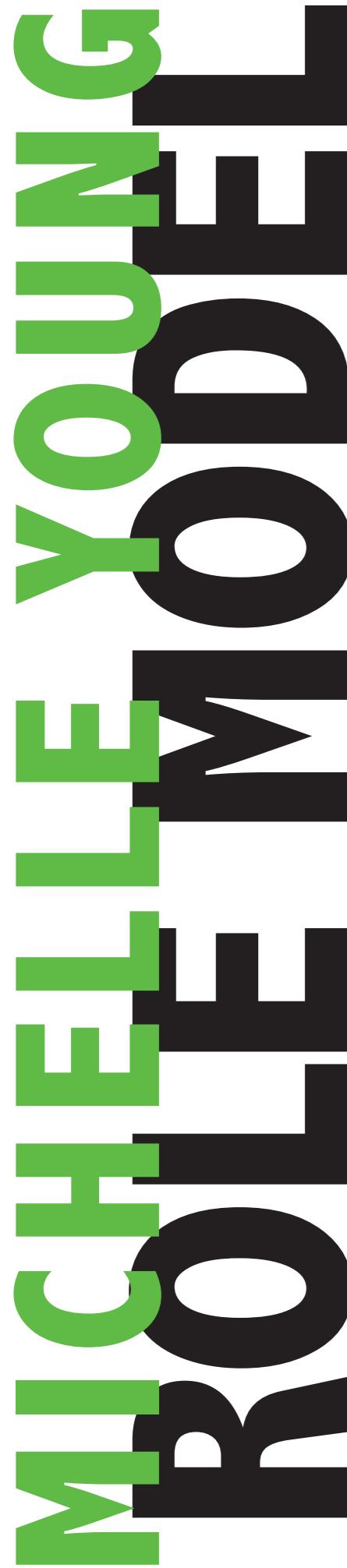
In 2005 Sarah started a six-month bridging course to become a band 4 and, in 2008, reached her goal as a band 5 radiographer, progressing to a band 6 in 2011.

In June 2013, she began her Pg cert in appendicular plain film reporting, passing it in January 2015. Sarah got seconded to the 8a clinical site lead and advanced practitioner until stepping down in December 2015 to continue working in plain film.

"I hope my story proves no matter what your background you can achieve whatever you believe you can achieve. With the help of the Trust I have progressed in my career and feel this is not yet the end. If you have drive and determination to progress then there are means of achieving your ambitions."

Equality to Sarah means that everyone is treated fairly and given the same opportunities. Her next ambition is to become a Consultant Radiographer.





ROLE: CANCER DATA COORDINATOR

Michelle has been at the Trust for 12 years, based at Good Hope in the Cancer Services Team as a Data Coordinator.

Michelle has the genetic neuromuscular condition Spinal Muscular Atrophy. Michelle became a full time electric wheelchair user by the age of 10 and her condition is classed as life limiting with a gradual loss of muscle.

Michelle has her own home and has done since she was 21. She employs four carers, to which she describes as family, to help her with all aspects of personal care and, of course, getting to and from work in her accessible vehicle. Outside of work she enjoys going to National Trust attractions, has a love of history and enjoys going to Star Trek conventions.

"I am patient and consider it my responsibility to challenge perceptions and language around disability. My co-workers now know a seated person is the preferred term as I am not BOUND to my chair. I also think it's good for some of the consultants I work with to see me working hard and chatting away as part of the team being aware of language and pre-conceived ideas, and that it helps them when dealing with patients with a disability.

"Personally having a disability that changes gradually can be a challenge, when you lose something that two months ago you could do, you don't always want to be accepting. Instead of worrying about what cards someone else has got, play the ones you have been dealt as best as you can."

Equality to Michelle doesn't mean ignoring or erasing her disability and identity, it means acknowledging it because then there can be acceptance and understanding.

"I do not wish to walk or become able bodied, I wish to be as I am but in an accessible accepting world. Don't ever feel ashamed that you have to say "I struggle with this" because if you aren't honest then people will make mistakes."

There is now a Network Group for staff with a disability or long-term health condition which meets regularly to provide support and advice. Email: sally.lawson@heartofengland.nhs.uk to find out more.



ROLE: SENIOR SISTER (SUPERVISORY WARD SISTER)

Tamar started her nursing diploma at Birmingham City University 12 years ago. During that time, Tamar also got married and had two children. Tamar is a Christian and totally puts her trust and faith in God.

"I believe that I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. I am assertive, confident and very passionate in everything that I do. I started working within this Trust at Heartlands seven years ago as a band 5 nurse."

During her first shift, **Tamar remembers being told by her allocated preceptor that there would be no progression for any staff within that area** and that's why she was leaving. There were also comments from other staff in regards to how hard it is for black staff to progress in the area and the Trust.

"I didn't let that affect my goal to progress. I sought advice as to what skills and experience I needed to progress as a band 6 and was told that I needed to be 18 months postgraduate and have intravenous competences. I worked toward achieving all the relevant skills and competences that were required. When the opportunity arose for a secondment role, I applied for it and was successful.

Her biggest challenge professionally was taking on her current role as a ward manager. There was no substantive team in place and the ward was run predominately by bank and agency nurses. Tamar was responsible for putting systems in place and building up the substantive team.

"I had the support of my Matron during this time and also used the peer support of more experienced managers and colleagues. I would like to inspire people to work hard and to be brave in following the path that they want to take. Focus on what you are aiming for and wanting to achieve and work towards it."

Equality to Tamar means treating people as individuals. Equality of opportunity is not about treating everyone the same, it's about giving people individually what they need to achieve the same as somebody else.

There is now a Network Group that supports Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff (BAME). Contact Sally.lawson@heartofengland.nhs.uk to find out more.

