

**Ashgate Hospice Press Release**

**13th October 2021**

**Ashgate Hospice’s Inpatient Unit wins prestigious Royal College of Nursing award**

The Inpatient Unit team from Ashgate Hospice have won an award from the Royal College of Nursing Institute.

The Outstanding Contribution to Infection Prevention and Control Award was won by the Inpatient Unit team, who were recognised for their scrupulous approach to infection prevention which had avoided any outbreaks of COVID and had allowed patients to continue to receive visitors throughout the pandemic.

“It is a privilege to be part of this incredible team who have consistently gone above and beyond to ensure our patients and their families receive the very best care,” Ashgate’s Ward Manager, Karen Walker said, in accepting the award.

She continued: “When COVID-19 first hit we were quick to respond to the changing demands and procedures that must be put in place, this was despite our own anxieties and fears around the virus.

“I feel honoured that my team have been acknowledged and it’s amazing that we have been given this award. I look forward to continuing to make a difference alongside my colleagues and ensuring those who need our care can access it.”

Ashgate is one of the few hospices in the UK which cared for end-of-life patients with COVID-19 throughout the pandemic. Earlier this year, demand for Ashgate’s support and services was so great that the hospice opened a second COVID wing. During this time, 1 in 3 beds were used by patients with COVID-19.

In addition, when many healthcare providers stopped patients receiving visitors, Ashgate committed to allowing visitors, including to end-of-life patients with COVID-19.

Barbara-Anne Walker, Chief Executive at Ashgate Hospice, said ensuring patient visits went ahead was a crucial part of the hospice’s culture which always puts patients and their families at the heart of their decision making.

“When someone is nearing the end of their life, they understandably want to spend the time they have left with the people who matter the most to them.

“Denying visits at this time could have catastrophic consequences to the wellbeing of the patient but also to the family, particularly after their loved one has died.

“Our team made it possible for our patients and their families to have dignity, respect and love during their final days.

“It feels very special to be recognised for the vital work our Inpatient Unit team do and the extraordinary efforts they have gone to in order to keep everyone safe during the pandemic.”

The rigorous infection control measures at Ashgate continue with weekly COVID testing for all patient facing staff and volunteers, strict PPE requirements for workers and visitors and ensuring access to COVID positive patients’ rooms for visitors is through a separate entrance and exit to the main ward.

Other infection control measures include:

All visitors and those who work at the hospice are temperature checked on arrival.

* Visitors and staff are asked to wear a clinical mask at all times.
* Visiting restrictions allow two named visitors per patient.
* Visitors to a patient with COVID must wear full PPE and access the ward through a separate entrance and exit.
* The housekeeping team are adhering to the recommended strict cleaning procedures.
* Visitors are unable to use the communal family spaces to ensure safe social distancing and are asked whenever possible to stay with their loved one in their room or outside space – with staff and our frontline volunteers ensuring that visitors have drinks and refreshments.
* Footfall has been reduced, with the overall number of people allowed on the ward reduced, and our other staff working remotely from home, wherever possible.

The 2021 RCNi Nurse Awards took place virtually, presented by Kate Garraway, who announced Ashgate as winners in their category.

Currently, Ashgate are recruiting for Registered General Nurses to join their award-winning Inpatient Unit Team. Anyone interested, should visit: https://ashgatehospice.org.uk/work-for-us/

**-ENDS-**

**Photo captions:**

**Award winners:** Karen (second from left) with some of her award-winning colleagues from the Inpatient Unit

**Karen Walker:** The moment Ward Manager, Karen Walker, was told that Ashgate’s Inpatient Unit had won

**Inpatient Unit Team:** Ashgate’s Inpatient Unit Team scooped the award for their Outstanding Contribution to Infection Prevention and Control

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**Notes for editors:**

1. Ashgate Hospice, based in Chesterfield, provides specialist palliative and end of life care including a wide range of community-based care and support services for people with a life-limiting illness and their families across North Derbyshire and the High Peak and Dales. [www.ashgatehospicecare.org.uk](http://www.ashgatehospicecare.org.uk/)