

Spotlight on: Caitriona Faherty

Nursing now
Ireland

CAITRIONA Faherty works at Craddock House in Naas. She has a special interest in dementia care and works in an 18-bed dementia unit at an 89-bed facility. The unit is designed to be homely and staff don't wear uniforms. Residents are encouraged to get involved with day-to-day activities at the centre.

Ms Faherty has wanted to be a nurse since she was four years old. Her father was involved with a charity that cared for the elderly so she spent much of her childhood around somewhat vulnerable older people. This ignited her desire to pursue a career in a caring profession and she commenced her training in 1993 at the Adelaide Hospital in Dublin. Although she is the first nurse in her extended family, she has always had an affinity for interacting with people and caring for others.

"I am absolutely passionate about seeing residents with a diagnosis of dementia live well and delivering a care service which recognises the uniqueness and individuality of each person. My role in this regard incorporates the hands-on clinical care which I enjoy tremendously and the contact with elderly people which I have always loved. Whilst the job does entail administrative work, rostering, auditing and policy development, I am happiest when I am with the residents.

"I believe that every single person on the team has an important role to play in the delivery of quality dementia care and so a representative from each department in the home is involved on the dementia committee, which I lead."

Ms Faherty feels that many people living with dementia benefit greatly from familiar faces and surroundings. "We get to know our residents extremely well which is incredibly rewarding. The knowledge of a person's life story greatly aids the provision of care and helps us to alleviate any distressed behaviour that can arise when a person is confused or disorientated."

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often the link between patients and many different health professionals, they have a unique role and can be extremely valuable in the development of new policies and procedures. For her, the nurse's role is essential in planning the provision of care, examining how care can be delivered more efficiently and, ultimately, in delivering optimum patient care.

"Our goal is to deliver excellent patient care. Nurses are often the link between members of the multidisciplinary team and are well placed to advocate for patients. Nurses should have as much input as possible into policy development and implementation as well as clinical governance, because we are at the coalface of the service."

Ms Faherty sees the untapped potential of nurses and their in-depth knowledge when it comes to leadership.

"We can draw on lots of situations we have found ourselves in. Once you have nursed for a while you know what good patient care looks and feels like. Coupled with our academic knowledge and wealth of experience, this puts us in good position to facilitate good patient care and should naturally move us into leadership roles."



Ms Faherty feels that nurses are an integral part of the healthcare team and are well placed as patient advocates to give the nuanced feedback that comes from working in such a hands-on role. She believes that nurses are well-placed to become leaders in the workplace, but is less certain that management and often nurses themselves recognise this potential.

For Ms Faherty, being a member of a union is essential. She is aware that nursing is evolving at an incredibly fast pace and feels that a union provides the support and information needed to stay abreast.

"Medicine and nursing are constantly evolving and it can be challenging to keep abreast of changing practices. A union is a vital source of information and support. Being in a unions is really advantageous for all workers and particularly for those of us working in the health service."

This article is part of our Nursing Now series. Nursing Now is a worldwide campaign that aims to achieve recognition of nurses' contribution to healthcare, gender equality, the economy and wider society. The aim of the campaign is to improve health globally by raising the profile of nurses worldwide and influencing policymakers and supporting nurses to lead, learn and build a global movement. For more information visit www.nursingnowireland.ie