

Spotlight on: Emma McGorman

EMMA McGorman is a newly qualified general nurse working in Letterkenny University Hospital in geriatric specialised care. She loves working with the elderly and often forms a bond with her patients. When Ms McGorman was younger, her grandmother lived with her family and looked after her as a child. However, when she became ill in later life their roles were reversed and she took on much of her care. Their bond was strong and Ms McGorman realised that she wanted to go into nursing.

Previously, Ms McGorman worked as a care assistant in St Joseph's, Monaghan. This gave her a foundation in healthcare and alerted her to the need to provide safe and effective care in a timely manner. She is passionate about caring for people and campaigning for better healthcare resources, particularly in Donegal. She decided not to leave Ireland to seek work abroad, but to stay and fight for a better system. She sees great potential in the Irish health service and the nursing and midwifery workforce.

"We train so hard and it is difficult to watch people forced to move abroad or change professions. We need to keep our newly qualified nurses here otherwise there is no future for the health service."

Ms McGorman is an INMO rep in her workplace and has been a trade union member since she was a student. She feels that the union is the backbone of any workforce.

"Nursing is changing every day but to see more effective change we need a strong union and proactive members supporting one another.

"Being a member of a union gives us some relief knowing that the union will provide a voice for our profession. It also provides a great network of peer support and opportunities to develop skills and access up-to-date learning and education for my own professional development. More newly qualified nurses should join the union, not only for the support it brings but for the professional development



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opportunities it offers."

Ms McGorman is also a member of the European Nursing Student Association (ENSA), an organisation for co-operation between national nursing student organisations or colleges of nursing in Europe. The purpose of ENSA is to bring together European nursing students and representatives from all countries across Europe to discuss both practical and theoretical elements of education, look at the differences and similarities, give and receive advice, and help each other understand the world of nursing.

Ms McGorman believes that without informed and supported student nurses and midwives, our healthcare system cannot move forward. She sees her role with ENSA as one where she can share the knowledge she acquires from her colleagues in the network with student nurses and midwives back in Ireland, in order to better support them.

Ms McGorman would like to see greater clinical responsibilities for nurses with more focus on research and audits. She feels that a preceptorship for newly qualified nurses and midwives would be useful to help them with their transition. She would also like to see increased focus on

care plans for patients and more time allocated to taking a personal approach when dealing with patients, their families and student nurses and midwives. She feels there is a need to start developing leadership skills as part of nursing and midwifery training.

"Every day is a challenge – you go in not knowing what might happen that day, but you give it your all regardless. You need good communication and the ability to work as part of a team. That personal touch and ability to connect with patients is so important. We go above and beyond our role daily and make clinical judgements."

Ms McGorman works in Letterkenny and dedicates much of her time to highlighting the need for greater supports and resources for healthcare provision in Donegal, which she calls "the forgotten county". She will be representing Europe (ENSA) in Brussels at the European Commission on Vaccinations Summit next month.

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