



## Making the difference for patients.

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**Sara Liyanage**  
Spire Healthcare patient

[Link to Strategy:](#)

### 3. Most recommended customer experience

When you are facing something that for most us is simply unthinkable, it is the quality of care and little personal touches that make such a difference. For Sara Liyanage, who had already undergone surgery to remove a ‘suspicious lump’ in her armpit, the prospect of coming into the oncology department at Spire Harpenden Hospital for chemotherapy was a daunting one.

“What really helped,” says Sara, “was that I was invited to visit the chemo ward before my treatment started, so that I would know what to expect. Even before that, I had met Amber, the breast care nurse, and she gave me her number and the number for the chemo ward, so that I could talk through any questions or worries I had about the chemotherapy up front.”

Sara met Vicki, a chemotherapy nurse, during this initial visit. Vicki showed her around the ward and talked Sara through the specific chemotherapy she would undergo. “Vicki talked me through everything and gave me a booklet explaining all the potential side effects,” says Sara. “And by seeing where things would happen, it wasn’t all new when I went for my first treatment.”

What struck Sara was the kind and gentle way everyone at Spire Harpenden Hospital treated her. “You just want the hospital visits to be less traumatic,” she explains. “You want them to make it as easy as possible – and that’s what they did. Even the receptionists got to know my face and remembered my name.

So, when I went up to the counter, they greeted me with ‘Hi, Sara, where are you going to today?’ It made such a difference to the whole experience.”

With four chemotherapy nurses, one breast care nurse, and one breast care assistant taking Sara through the process, she underwent six cycles of treatment, each three weeks apart, allowing time for recovery from a harsh cocktail of drugs. 12 more cycles followed, each just a week apart, as the dosage was lower. Sara also had to go through a biological therapy course, which involved infusions of herceptin. She finally showed ‘no evidence of disease’ in May 2018 but will remain on medication for the next five to 10 years and is now monitored three times a year.

“I can’t fault the nurses in any way,” says Sara. “They were such a lifeline for me, because each of them helped me in a different way. I could even have a laugh with them. They were so approachable, I could ask them about anything, it was never any trouble. They were so welcoming every time and being on the receiving end of kindness makes the world of difference.”