



Celebrating World Patient Safety Day 2026

Each year on 17 September healthcare organisations around the world mark World Patient Safety Day. This day is a chance for all those working in the healthcare industry to raise awareness on the importance of safe and high-quality care.

World Patient Safety Day gives an opportunity for everyone to reflect on the progress made towards patient safety, share lessons learned and continue to think about the importance of improving outcomes for patients. For World Patient Day 2026 the JETS Workforce team caught up with Rachel Rees to provide her thoughts on the importance of World Patient Safety Day.



Could you please provide a brief background of yourself and your history of working?

I qualified as a registered nurse in 2007 and began my career on a Care of the Elderly ward. Over three years, I developed a strong foundation in patient-centred care and core clinical nursing skills.

In 2010, I joined endoscopy as a band 5 staff nurse, beginning my specialist career in the field. In 2013, I progressed to a band 6 deputy unit manager, further developing my leadership, management and specialist endoscopy skills.

I continued to progress within endoscopy and, in February 2022, was appointed endoscopy unit manager, taking on greater responsibility for service delivery, staff leadership, quality and patient care.

In 2025, I further developed my career through secondment opportunities, taking on the role of lead nurse with the Endoscopy Academy of Wales alongside a secondment as practice education facilitator for endoscopy within Cwm Taf Morgannwg University Health Board (CTMUHB). These roles have enabled me to build on my clinical and leadership experience while developing a particular focus on education, workforce development and supporting high-quality endoscopy practice.



What does patient safety mean to you in your day-to-day role?

For me, patient safety means ensuring every patient receives the right care at the right time from staff who are trained, competent and confident in their roles. In daily practice, it means fostering a culture where safety is shared by everyone, and where staff feel able to speak up, ask questions and act when something does not seem right.

In endoscopy, patient safety begins well before the procedure. It relies on appropriate referral, robust vetting and pre-assessment, accurate patient identification, safe preparation and medication management, clear communication and teamwork, adherence to policies and guidance, and the prompt recognition and management of deterioration or complications.

Through my leadership and education roles, I see staff development as central to patient safety. By supporting staff to build their knowledge, skills and confidence — and helping them understand the reasons behind safe practice — we strengthen the quality of care we provide. For me, patient safety is not a single action or checklist; it should guide every decision throughout the patient's endoscopy journey.

Why is Patient Safety Day important for healthcare professionals and patients alike?

Patient Safety Day is important because it gives us time to reflect on how we provide safe, high-quality care and where we can improve. It encourages staff to share learning, speak openly about concerns and recognise good practice. It also reinforces the importance of listening to patients and involving them in decisions about their care, so their experiences help shape safer services.

How has awareness of patient safety changed during your career and what changes have you seen/made throughout your career?

Over the course of my career, patient safety has become far more prominent and firmly embedded in everyday practice. The focus has shifted positively towards openness, learning from incidents and enabling staff to speak up, rather than assigning individual blame.

In endoscopy, I have seen important improvements in safety checklists, governance, competency-based training and standardised practice. As I have moved into leadership and education roles, I have supported these developments by promoting safe practice, strengthening staff competence and encouraging teams to reflect, learn and continually improve the care we deliver.

How can healthcare teams work together to improve patient safety?

Healthcare teams can strengthen patient safety through clear communication, effective teamwork and shared accountability for safe care. An open culture is essential, where all staff feel confident to speak up, ask questions and raise concerns. By sharing learning from incidents and examples of good practice, and by making time for regular training and reflection, teams can continue to improve and keep patient safety at the centre of everyone's role.

Looking ahead, what do you think should be the biggest priority for improving patient safety?

Looking ahead, a key priority for improving patient safety is sustained investment in the workforce through education, training and continuing professional development. Staff need the knowledge, skills and confidence to provide safe care. We must also continue to foster an open culture in which staff and patients feel able to raise concerns, share experiences and learn from them.