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We Are Social Care Nurses

Welcome to this regular bulletin that brings the latest news and shares some of the exceptional work that's being undertaken in social care. We'll be sharing blogs, interviews and news from people working on the ground in nursing and other experts in the field of nursing.

This is the third edition and, over time, we hope this will be a voice for nurses working in social care so if you'd like to contribute, please email SocialCareNursing@skillsforcare.org.uk.

If you know of someone who you think would like to receive We Are Social Care Nurses, please ask them to subscribe by filling in a [simple form on our website](#).

Why I'm proud to be a Queen's Nurse and my experience in social care

Sharon Lee, Primary Care Workforce Programme Lead at Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), who was awarded the title of Queen's Nurse in 2012 discusses her background in social care and what it means to be a Queen's Nurse, for both NHS and social care nurses.



I began my nursing career in 1978 as an apprentice nurse and after qualifying worked in a nursing home and then in occupational health at the nuclear power station. Following a career break in 1985 to start a family, I returned in 1990 to work in an acute hospital setting.

I moved into primary care in 1992. I'm proud to say I was awarded the Queen's Nurse title in 2012 and then joined the Guild of Nurses in 2019. More recently I was

thrilled to be awarded Freedom of the City of London in 2021. In all that time I've never forgotten my experience of working in a nursing home and the amazing work nurses do on behalf of their residents within the home despite the fact these nurses don't always have the opportunities I've been lucky enough to access.

As a result of that experience, when I embarked on my role as Primary Care Workforce Programme Lead at Kent and Medway Clinical Commissioning Group which had an emphasis on workforce development I wanted to ensure any opportunities that were available to NHS nurses were also available to my social care colleagues wherever possible.

I set up the Care Home Education Programme within my former CCG which enabled both nurses and carers to access free monthly education; it was always very well attended. Since then, I've continued to support and promote initiatives for my social care colleagues and since 2012 have been raising the profile of the Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI), which is a registered charity that's dedicated to improving the nursing care of people in their home wherever that may be.

Becoming a Queen's Nurse is such an honour and recognises the promotion of the highest standards of patient care in the community. The QNI provides a forum for colleagues to network, as well as opportunities for development and support and access to a [wealth of resources](#) including for care home nursing.

Having achieved the title I so desperately wanted my social care colleagues to achieve the same, as I know how hard they strive to provide the highest standards of care. To date I'm thrilled to say we have one social care nurse that has recently been awarded the title and at our last Social Care Nurses Network Forum for which I'm joint Chair I was pleased to hear others are planning to apply in the next round of recruitment.

⇒ [To find out more and apply please visit the QNI website.](#)

The value of preceptorship for social care nurses

By Donna North, Head of Nursing at Exemplar Health Care

The most exciting but challenging time of a nurse's career is the first few months following registration, as they make the transition from student to professional registered practitioner.

What happens in these first few months decides how a new registrant settles into an organisation and influences their decision to stay or leave.

With a turnover rate of registered nurses in adult social care of 38.2% in 20/21, compared to 8.8% in the NHS (Skills for Care, 2021), it's vital that we, as social care employers, provide



high quality induction and preceptorship for newly qualified nurses.

Preceptorship welcomes newly qualified nurses into their new place of work, and gives them the time and support to develop confidence and put learning into practice.

Last year at Exemplar Health Care, we introduced a new preceptorship programme which has already had great success.

The programme introduces the values, goals and objectives of the organisation so that preceptees feel like part of the team as quickly as possible. It also imparts essential safety and risk management information, provides core mandatory training and gives nurses the practical information they need to begin their new jobs.

Our preceptorship programme is 12 months long, of which the first 12 weeks are supernumerary. During this time, preceptees do a one week preceptorship induction, have 12 weeks supernumerary support in practice, access RCNi online learning modules and have regular supervisions with a preceptor.

The first few weeks are for the preceptee to settle in, observe practice and understand the expectations of the role. They'll also work alongside the care team to deliver direct care – we believe this is important to get to know the people they'll be supporting.

During weeks three and four, preceptees work under the supervision of an experienced practitioner. And between weeks four and 12, the preceptee will be assessed as competent to work under the indirect supervision of a registered nurse.

Following completion of their 12 week probation, preceptees continue with regular supervisions and learning and development, and complete their NMC portfolio.

Last year, we introduced a new workbook to guide preceptees through the programme. It outlines the expectations, critical successes and competencies required for the role. Having everything in a handy workbook provides a structure for supervision meetings and gives preceptees a place to log their progress.

Since launching in November 2021, the 'new look' preceptorship programme has supported the induction of 7 nursing associates and 19 newly qualified nurses.

We've had great feedback about the programme. Gurjinder Kaur, a preceptorship nurse at Parkside, shared: "I've felt that I've been supported throughout my preceptorship. When I started here I was very nervous as this was my first job in the UK as a nurse. However, now I know that I made the right decision to join Parkside and Exemplar Health Care. All of the nursing staff are supportive, the home manager is always there if you have a question, and you're supported by a clinical nurse manager at all times."

Why all social care nurses play an essential role in preventing illness, protecting health and promoting wellbeing

By Professor Jamie Waterall, England's Deputy Chief Public Health Nurse, Office for Health Improvement and Disparities

The COVID-19 pandemic has illustrated why all health and care professionals play an important public health role. History has demonstrated that often from times of adversity, there is an opportunity to make change happen. This was exactly what happened when Florence Nightingale returned from the Crimean War back in the mid-1800s. Having collected hospital mortality data for two years, while out in Crimea, Nightingale used a pioneering way to present her findings. Using her rose diagrams, she was able to clearly illustrate that most people were dying from poor sanitation and infection, which was considered largely preventable. As we now know, Nightingale used this time to transform our nursing education and practice, and her contribution is still celebrated today.

So, what needs to change during the 2020s and as we start to build back from the COVID-19 pandemic? Well, I truly hope that all social care nurses will now see that they all play an important public health role. If we are to support individuals, communities and the wider population to live longer and healthier lives, whilst also addressing health inequalities, this will require all health and care professionals to recognise the important public health contributions that they can make.

As nurses, it is important that we access evidence-based information and guidance on the major public health issues affecting those that we care for within our work settings and communities. We need to be able to understand the interventions that we can scale at a population, community, and individual level to address these public health challenges. That is why the Office for Health Improvement and Disparities has introduced the All Our Health framework for all health and care professionals. The aim of All Our Health is to support professional colleagues to better understand the critical public health issues of our time and allow them to consider the role that they can play in promoting and delivering evidence-based interventions. Our framework has been designed to provide all health and care professionals with brief advice and information on important topics such as falls and fractures prevention, dementia, and mental health and wellbeing in an easily accessible and engaging format. This includes useful links to data, national guidelines, and a brief knowledge check for those wanting to measure their understanding of key topics. This is also a great way to provide evidence for continued professional development, which all nurses can use for their revalidation.

I would encourage all social care nursing colleagues to start using the All Our Health framework today. By working together, we can be a positive force for change in improving the lives of all, but our focus must also be on addressing health inequalities that persist for many groups. Let's use the 2020s as a decade which sees our profession build an equal focus on preventing illness, protecting health and promoting wellbeing as we do for treating and managing disease.

[⇒ Access the All Our Health resources and tools today](#)

A word from Deborah Sturdy

As we emerge from the intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic and two years of continuous effort, commitment and goodwill, just saying “thank you” to care colleagues past and present feels woefully inadequate. I was privileged to join two memorial events last month to mark the beginning of the pandemic and remember those we sadly lost: our friends, family and colleagues.



So, it was with both sadness and pride that I laid a wreath at the [NHS Charities Together event](#) held at the National Arboretum in Staffordshire last month.

Remembrance and gratitude aren't limited to one day of course, so I am pleased there are plans to have a permanent memorial on the site for both social care and health colleagues. It will be a space where people can sit, remember and reflect on the pandemic's impact on all of us.

The second event, facilitated by [Skills for Care](#), was a national day of remembrance and reflection, which included contributions from sector leaders and the [Care Workers' Charity](#). The contributions were both poignant and personal. Just like all who attended virtually or in person, I took a moment to reflect on my own experience of working through the pandemic.

I thought back to those early days, when we knew so little about the virus, but were expected to do so much. At no point did I consider my personal risk. As care professionals, our duty – our desire – was to protect others. We accepted the challenges and we worked through them, and we continue to do so.

I recall the extreme exhaustion I felt working the longest of days, seven days a week. Decision fatigue hit me day after day and yet, just like so many other colleagues, I smiled, picked myself up and did what I could to carry others through the darkest of times.

During the event, I also thought about the need to keep nurturing and supporting each other. We have to keep the conversations going in our teams and not feel ashamed if we need more help. We are only human.

Even with the additional demands of COVID-19, working in social care remains an intensely rewarding experience, whatever you do and wherever you do it. It can also be emotionally demanding at times, which is why we need to keep our focus on wellbeing and make sure we have the support in place to protect, nurture and sustain our colleagues, now and in the future.

The [£500 million set out as part of the reform agenda for social care](#) includes monies to improve wellbeing, including counselling, coaching and support for new registered managers in their first year. The [Care Home Nurses Network hosted by the Queen's Nursing Institute](#) is another important forum where nurses can come together and share.

Skills for Care's work in [supporting managers in regional networks](#) is another space in which to learn and be supported. Meanwhile, the [British Geriatric Society](#) has a

special interest group for nurses and therapists.

Coming together helps, sharing problems makes us feel less isolated, and learning from others is truly empowering. Wherever you work in the care sector, it's essential to find the support which suits you. We cannot care for others effectively if we don't care for ourselves, professionally and personally. Let's support each other to maintain our energy, drive and dedication to make a real difference in so many lives.

Deborah

Wendy Leighton awarded CNO Gold Award as she ends long and successful time at Skills for Care

One of our own former employees has been awarded a CNO Gold Award for her contribution to social care.

Wendy Leighton, former Project Manager for Regulated Professionals at Skills for Care, has been awarded a Chief Nursing Officer Gold Award for outstanding services to social care from Chief Nurse for Social Care, Deborah Sturdy.



The award came as Wendy marked her last day working with Skills for Care in January 2022, after three successful years with the organisation, where Wendy made a real impact on nursing in social care.

The award was presented to Wendy in a virtual meeting attended by Wendy, Deborah and many of Wendy's Skills for Care's colleagues who were sad to see her move on from the organisation but were delighted to see her honoured with this important award.

Speaking of the award Wendy said "It's the first time I've been speechless in a meeting. I feel very honoured and privileged.

Commemorating her late mum she added, "Mum would have loved this."

Honouring Wendy, Deborah Sturdy said "Wendy has been a passionate advocate for nursing in social care and has led huge amounts of work in supporting the role of nurse associates. Congratulations Wendy!"

Wendy joined Skills for Care in January 2019. During her time at Skills for Care she worked on multiple projects to support the social care nursing workforce, and whilst previously working in Higher Education she was instrumental in the introduction and development of the nursing associate role leading on the first wave of applicants to this role in Lincolnshire; social care leaders were key strategic partners, this saw some of the first nursing associates supported in a

social care setting.

Wendy has also played a key role in supporting student nursing placements and creating various guidance to support registered nurses, nursing associates, student nurses, and their employers across the social care sector. Wendy has worked closely with the Chief Nursing Officer and the wider team at Skills for Care. She says that the role of the Chief Nurse in social care has been invaluable to the workforce development aspirations for the social care workforce.

Wendy led the work to produce the Valuing Social Nursing in Social Care Conference in October of 2021 this was aimed at employers, student nurses and HEI colleagues. Giving voice to the innovation and value of nursing in social care and Wendy is particularly proud of how the voice of the expert by experience was not just included but involved in the development of the conference.

Wendy is now focusing full-time on her role as Senior Lecturer at the University of Lincoln.

We'd love to hear from you

We Are Social Care Nurses is to highlight and showcase what is going on in nursing, to give a voice to the nurses who are working in social care, and for colleagues to better understand the complexity of the role.

We'd like the content to be led by the workforce to show what is happening on the ground and in reality, and so if you'd like to contribute by writing about a topic of your choice, maybe something that is particularly important to you, please email SocialCareNursing@skillsforcare.org.uk

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