

# Community Nursing Innovation Programme

Innovations that improve patient care







The Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) is a national charity that supports nurses to deliver best nursing care to individuals, carers, families, and communities.

Nurse-led projects are one of the most direct ways in which the QNI helps nurses improve patient care. Since 1990 the QNI has funded over 300 innovative projects across the whole range of community nursing specialties. Sharing the results of these projects helps us to drive improvements in knowledge and practice. Often, these funded projects become part of mainstream services.

**Who is the programme for?**

Any nurse working in the community or primary care in England, Wales and Northern Ireland who wants to make a difference and improve the life of their patients/clients

**Programme Structure**

At the beginning of the project year, each project team agrees an overall aim, specific aims and objectives for their project. A monitoring framework is developed in order to agree on project outcomes and how the predicted outcomes would be monitored, measured and reported.

As part of the award agreement each project team will submit an interim report six months into the project which enables us to evaluate the progress of the project. An end of year report is also required and a case profile which tells the story of one patient's journey through the life of the project.

Covid permitting, all projects are visited by a member of the QNI team. The purpose of the site visit is to review the progress of the project against the project plan and offer appropriate support and guidance to the project team. The site visits are very well received by both the project leads and the managers of the clinical areas. They provide an opportunity for the QNI to contextualise the project, to become familiar with the environment within which the projects are being led and managed and to engage with colleagues and managers supporting the projects. The visits also provide an opportunity to engage with an organisation's communications team to publicise the project locally within their organisation and community.

“ These projects have helped many thousands of patients and also assisted hundreds of nurses to realise their potential to implement innovation in practice. The projects improve care for individuals, families and carers directly and through sharing the learning, the nurses have advanced practice locally and regionally.’

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, QNI Chief Executive



## Workshops

A real strength of project support are the workshops provided by the QNI. Project teams attend three two-day face to face or online workshops during the project year; the programme is tailored to support the teams through the delivery of the project. Topics include evaluating outcomes, writing for publication, creating a poster presentation, understanding commissioning, business planning, economic sustainability and creative thinking. There are also monthly online support meetings.

All participants are invited to receive their certificate of achievement at the QNI Awards Ceremony following completion of the programme.

## Future projects

An independent evaluation of the Innovation Programme, 'Rising Stars', which included a review of ten years of QNI-supported innovation projects, found that 65% of projects had continued beyond the project year, in many cases adopted by commissioners into mainstream services. 47% of the project leaders indicated that the programme had inspired them to undertake further educational qualifications.

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“ Just thank you for the opportunity. I wouldn't be in the job I am in now without the benefit of the experience gained through the QNI Innovation Programme and my current job enables me to reach out to far more patients than ever before through education, leadership and clinical excellence.

Innovation project lead

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“ This project benefited me so much as I was listened to as a carer and felt valued in the professionals asking me questions and I felt I was able to add to discussions on the role of carer and frailty. Before this project, no one has really ever listened to me nor took the time to ask what would make a difference to me and what would help me not get frail in the future. It was all so positive'.

Innovation project beneficiary

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“ Sometimes one feels alone and unsupported; not so when one can see the enthusiasm and perception that has emerged from this unique carer project, led by someone with such passion and insight. I do hope that the project can be continued and developed - it has been the most valuable project I have ever witnessed develop over my own fifty years of Medical Practice'

Innovation project lead

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**Project case study: 'Best Foot Forward'; Claire Coleman, Homeless Health Outreach Nurse, Bath**

John\* was a 42 year old man who had lived a transient lifestyle for most of his adult life having spent all his childhood in foster care, where he had experienced frequent abuse. He alternated between rough sleeping and prison after leaving the care system.

John was unable to care for himself properly because of physical disabilities. When I first met him he was using an old bicycle as a frame to walk with. He was unkempt and often urinated in his clothes as he was unable to open his trousers in time. He had developed leg ulcers and had frequent bouts of trench foot. His feet were in an extremely poor condition.

It took a lot of persuasion to get John to come to the foot clinic. He was very embarrassed not only about his appearance but also his inability to care for himself. We took the opportunity to change his clothes and spruce him up which increased his confidence. John was often very low at the start of a session but usually left laughing and joking. He used to say that he couldn't believe we would want to help someone like him, especially considering the state of his feet.

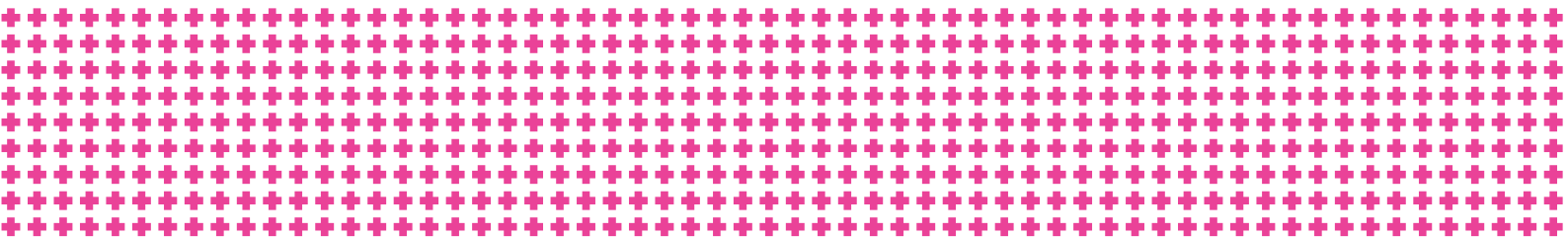
Throughout the duration of the project, John was a sporadic attender, however his leg ulcers cleared up and his feet improved. He recommended the clinic to other service users frequently.

Sadly John passed away a few days before his 43rd birthday. John did not have a particularly happy childhood or adult life. He had had few positive experiences of dealing with healthcare professionals. However during the last few months of his life we were able to demonstrate to him that he was cared for and valued.'

“ John used to say that he couldn't believe we would want to help someone like him.  
Innovation project lead

If you have any queries about the programme please contact Sue Boran, Director of Nursing Programmes (Innovation) at [sue.boran@qni.org.uk](mailto:sue.boran@qni.org.uk).

To read about past projects or case studies, go to [www.qni.org.uk/explore-qni/nurse-led-projects/](http://www.qni.org.uk/explore-qni/nurse-led-projects/)



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