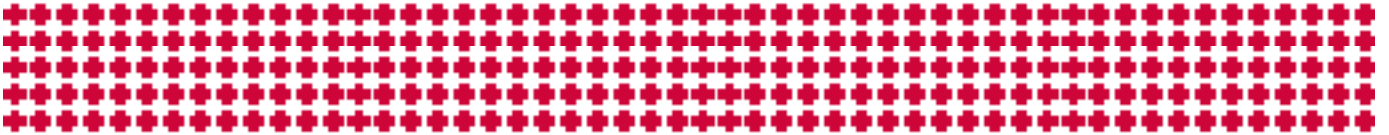


HomeVisit

News for supporters of the QNI

The charity dedicated to improving patient care by supporting nurses working in the community



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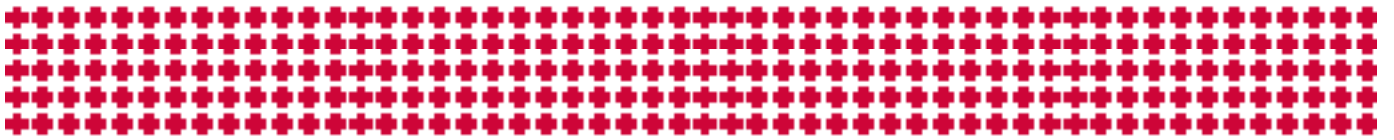
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Season's Greetings from CEO Dr Crystal Oldman CBE



The QNI has achieved so much in 2024, and we're proud to be home to a growing number of thriving, innovative, and supportive networks of practice.

We've continued to be strong advocates for nurses in the community, primary care, and social care, working hard to raise their profile among commissioners, policymakers, the media, and the public.

We're seeing growing recognition of the vital role community nurses play in every area of practice. Their work is essential to meeting the increasingly complex health needs of the communities they serve.

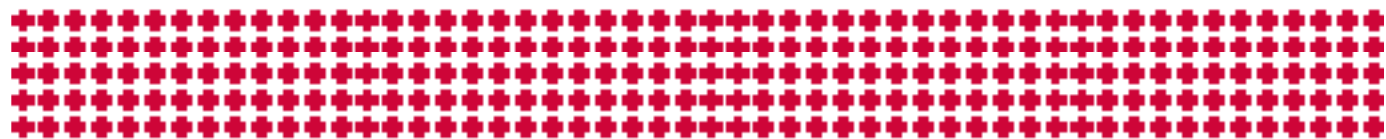
This year has shown how flexible and responsive the QNI can be, as we've adapted our resources to meet our key goals—doing everything we can to support nurses working in all community settings.

As we look ahead, I know 2025 will bring its own challenges and joys, but I want to wish you, your families, friends, and communities the very best of health, happiness, and success in the year to come—from myself and the entire QNI team.



Season's Greetings
from The Queen's Nursing Institute





Welcome to New Queen's Nurses 2024



The QNI announced this year's new Queen's Nurses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: 587 nurses working in the community, in primary care and social care received the title of Queen's Nurse in 2024. The total number of Queen's Nurses in England, Wales and Northern Ireland is now around 3500*.

The new Queen's Nurses will receive their badges and certificates at the QNI's Awards Ceremony on 29th November at a venue in central London.

The prestigious title of Queen's Nurse was reintroduced in 2007 after a gap of almost 40 years. The title is not an award, but a recognition of a nurse's commitment to ongoing learning, leadership and excellence in healthcare.

Queen's Nurses must complete a rigorous online application process, and each application is assessed anonymously by two assessors, with an additional moderation process. All applicants must have worked in the community for at least five years. The criteria also allow educators and service managers to apply, and those working in primary care and social care settings.

The Queen's Nurse network is funded by the generosity of the National Garden Scheme, the longstanding strategic partner of the QNI.

Queen's Nurses say in their own words what receiving the title means to them:

'Being awarded the title of Queen's Nurse is extremely humbling and a great honour. It will assist me in my passion for nursing palliative care patients in the community and to support the wellbeing of people in rural communities. Being a part of a historic institute is a great privilege and I look forward to networking with other Queen's Nurses and sharing our experiences to enhance the lives of our patients.'

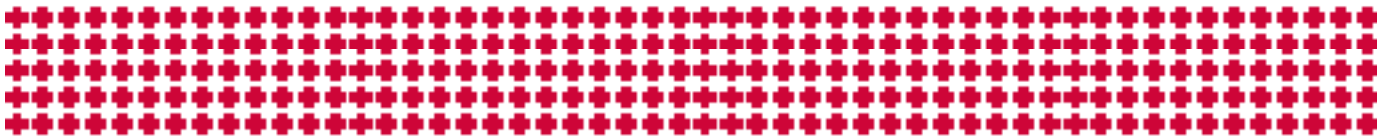
A Queen's Nurse

'I couldn't be more delighted or proud to join the network of brilliant Queen's Nurses; I am really looking forward to meeting and learning from as many of them as possible as I know my own professional development will benefit from their experience and support.'

A Queen's Nurse

*The number of active QNs varies slightly as nurses retire or move careers or rejoin community nursing after an absence.

Turn the page to find out more about the Awards Ceremony.



Achievements of Community Nurses Celebrated at QNI Awards Ceremonies 2024



Presentations were made by Dame Elizabeth Anionwu, QNI Vice President and Patron of the Mary Seacole Trust, and Professor John Unsworth OBE, Chair of Council, The QNI.

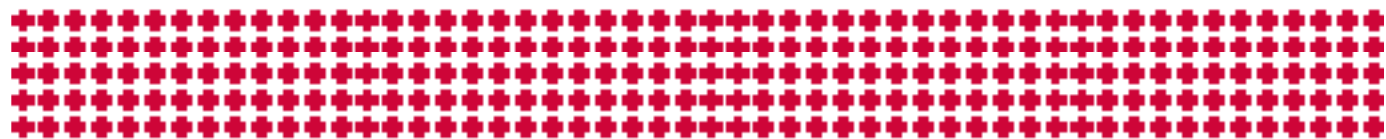
The Council and Staff of the QNI were delighted to welcome George Plumptre, Chief Executive of the National Garden Scheme, to speak at the event. The support of the National Garden Scheme enables the QNI to operate the Queen's Nurse programme and Elsie Wagg Innovation Scholarships.

The QNI held its annual Awards Ceremonies on Friday 29th November at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in London. Bringing together more than 500 community nurses, the ceremony highlights the exceptional work of community nurses across nursing services, education, innovation and leadership, and the vital role they play in the healthcare system.

The event included the presentation some of the most prestigious awards in nursing, including the Queen's Nurse title, the Queen Elizabeth the Queen Mother Award for Outstanding Service, the International Community Nurse of the Year Award, and memorial prizes for post-registration nursing students.

Professor John Unsworth OBE, Chair of the QNI Council, surprised Dr Agnes Fanning, Assistant Director of Nursing Programmes at the QNI, with the Chief Nursing Officer for Adult Social Care Gold Award for her outstanding contribution to social care. The award was given on behalf of Professor Deborah Sturdy CBE, Chief Nurse for Adult Social Care.

To read the full list of awards and winners and to view photos of the events, please go to: <https://qni.org.uk/news-and-events/news/outstanding-community-nurses-celebrated-at-qni-annual-awards/>



The QNI responds to the Change NHS Consultation



The QNI has submitted its Organisational Response to the Change NHS Consultation, intended to shape the Government's 10-Year Health Plan to improve the health service which will be published in Spring.

The UK Government launched the NHS reform consultation in October, inviting members of the public as well as NHS staff and experts to share their experiences, views and ideas for changing the NHS in 'the biggest national conversation about the future of the NHS since its birth'.

A summary of the QNI's Organisational Response can be found below. Go to <https://qni.org.uk/news-and-events/news/the-qnis-response-to-the-change-nhs-consultation/> to read the full response.

Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, QNI Chief Executive said, 'As nurses are the single largest professional group in the NHS, and we believe nurses serving their communities in all fields of practice in the community comprise more than half of the nursing workforce, your voice is essential if the consultation is to be a success.'

Q1) What does the QNI want to see included in the 10-Year Health Plan and why?

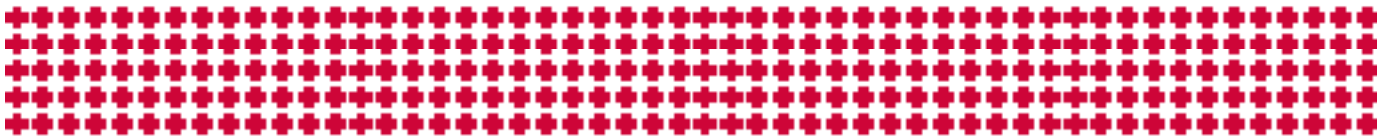
- Invest in education and training through a fully funded workforce plan to ensure that the community nursing workforce, in all its forms, is restored to pre-austerity levels within a decade. This will support the proactive management of long-term conditions to prevent unnecessary admission to hospital.
- Develop advanced practice nursing roles to ensure residents in all nursing homes have access to specialist care that prevents deterioration and

manages frailty.

- Develop and implement a public health strategy for England designed to address poor diet and obesity, smoking and vaping, and physical inactivity.
- Improve end-of-life care for all ages through strengthening the end-of-life workforce including district nurses, community children's nurses and hospice staff. A renewed emphasis on the Gold Standards framework to ensure parity of provision across service providers.
- Recognise the need for accessible and responsive mental health services at a variety of different levels including tier one support in schools, workplaces and specialist teams for enduring mental health issues.

Q2) What does the QNI see as the biggest challenges and enablers to move more care from hospitals to communities?

- Challenge – neglecting nursing expertise in policy development.



- Enabler – include nurses in all significant health policy conversations, and/or for policy makers to shadow nurses and health visitors in practice in the community.
- Challenge – staffing shortages and staff retention.
- Enabler – increase investment in district nursing.

Q3) What does the QNI see as the biggest challenges and enablers to making better use of technology in health and care?

- Enabler – Investment to improve poor IT infrastructure.
- Challenge – poor connectivity hindering new tech rollouts.
- Challenge – poor data around the size of the community nursing workforce.

Q4) What does the QNI see as the biggest challenges and enablers to spotting illnesses

earlier and tackling the causes of ill health?

- Challenge – more investment in public health is needed.
- Enabler – renewed focus on health visitors and school nurses.
- Enabler – taxation on unhealthy products.

Q5) The QNI's Specific Ideas for Change (with timeframe):

- Quick to do – An action to address early retirement in community nursing: reform the Advanced Practice Digital Badge Scheme.
- Starting immediately, in 2-5 years – establish a core professional development programme. E.g a community nursing environmental sustainability programme.
- Start immediately and up to 10 years – A campaign to change the perception of community nursing.

To find out more about the NHS reform consultation and to submit your views, go to: <https://change.nhs.uk/en-GB/>

Wreath Laying at the Edith Cavell Statue



Edith Cavell, who trained as a nurse at the Royal London Hospital, was executed by a German firing squad on 12 October 1915. She was accused of helping allied prisoners escape from occupied Belgium during World War 1.

Each year there is a wreath laying ceremony on 12 October by her memorial which stands in St Martin in the Field in London.

The QNI's Chief Executive, Dr Crystal Oldman CBE laid a wreath from the QNI (photo far left).



Supporting Unpaid Carers to Recognise Their Rights

As Carers Champion at the QNI, I am supporting and encouraging all nurses working in the community to support Carers Rights Day, an annual national day that shines a light on unpaid carers of all ages and raises awareness of the help and support they are entitled to.

Being an unpaid carer can be rewarding and fulfilling but can also take its toll on health and wellbeing and have a personal and financial impact, including affecting the ability to access and remain in paid work. Children and young people with caring responsibilities have lower educational attendance and attainment than their peers, are less likely to achieve a university degree, and are less likely to be employed, whilst also dealing with increased mental health and financial issues.

Census data from 2021 found 4.7 million people were providing unpaid care in England equating to 8.9% of the total population over the age of 5. The theme for Carers Rights Day theme this year is 'Recognising Your Rights'. This theme aims to not only helps carers to understand the rights they have but also provide an opportunity for professionals to ask themselves: Do I know who are unpaid carers, including young carers? Do I know what support they are entitled to? and if not, where can I find out? As nurses, we should be curious about the patients and service users in the communities we serve but also aware of the 3.7 million working carers who may well be our friends, family and colleagues.

Unpaid carers – anyone who provides care, unpaid, for a friend or family member who due to illness, disability, a mental health problem or an addiction and cannot cope without their support – play a key role in the health and care system – King's Fund (2024)

Community nurses work across the whole life course, in all community settings and are in a

unique position to identify, support and signpost unpaid carers including young carers to the support they are entitled to.

Here are some tips from the experts:



Tom Smith, Unpaid Carer Expert by Experience: 'One action they could do is to refresh themselves on carers rights if they aren't confident already. If they are confident, they could provide carers

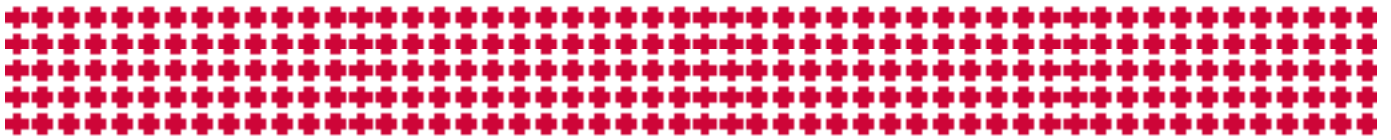
with details of these rights, whether that's a leaflet, a website with this information or just verbally informing carers about them. In many cases, they may be the first professional who is made aware of the caring role, and so need to be confident in their knowledge of rights and have the resources available for them if needed. If they haven't got the information or resources, the carers they work with are also highly unlikely to.

Carers have many rights relating to different aspects of their life e.g work, hospital discharge, support (including assessment), and protection from discrimination. Details can be found about these rights on a wide range of websites including both national and local charities and organisations who support unpaid carers of all ages.'



Debbie Hustings – Triangle of Care Programme Lead: 'To empower carers we need empowered staff. Ensure they have a really good understanding of what carers rights are and make sure they

have the skills and knowledge to bring these into everyday practice.'



Andrea Spratling QN, School Nurse Practice Assessor:

'I would say that if you are a young carer you need to know that you are entitled to a free assessment to check that the level of caring you are giving is appropriate and something you want to do. It can also help to find out what support you might need. Then show them this website.'



Sara, Young Adult Carer Expert by Experience:

'One thing community nurses can do to recognise unpaid carers rights is by speaking with the unpaid carers and signposting to places to support the unpaid carers.'



Amanda Jackson QN - 0-19 PHINS Clinical Team Manager:

'Community nurses can support unpaid carers/young carers by being curious and asking questions around caring responsibilities as part of making every contact count. This raises

awareness of identifying carers and normalises conversations about caring responsibilities. Unpaid carers or young carers can then be signposted to support organisations.'

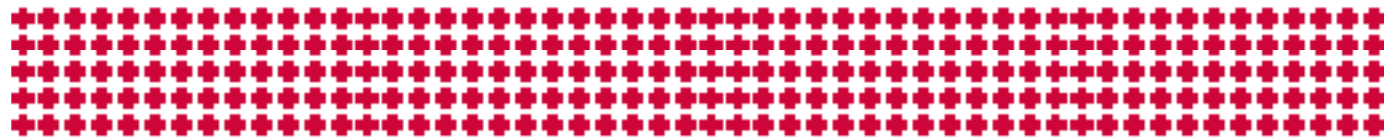


Andy McGowan - Policy & Practice Manager, Carers Trust:

'Think about how they can identify unpaid carers as early as possible and remember - just because the person they are caring for appears to be doing OK, it doesn't mean the carer is.'

The QNI continues its commitment to supporting community nurses and unpaid carers of all ages and has updated and relaunched its Supporting Carers webpage. If I can recommend one action you take this Carers Rights Day - take a look at the new page (here: <https://qni.org.uk/nursing-in-the-community/supporting-carers-2/>) and share the link!

Fiona Rogers, Queen's Nurse, is the Nursing Programmes Manager (Innovation) and Carers Champion at the Queen's Nursing Institute.



New experiences as a Queen’s Nurse in the Cayman Islands



Top left: Helen mentoring students, top right: Cayman Islands Nursing & Midwifery Association board meeting; bottom left: view from the Cayman Island.

Queen’s Nurse Helen Kirk describes her new role supporting local healthcare in the Cayman Islands. She is currently a Quality Improvement Nurse and President of the Cayman Islands Nursing and Midwifery Association.

A little over year ago, I embarked on a new journey. I left DHSC, relocated to the Cayman Islands and embraced a new role. The past 12 months have been transformative, filled with opportunities to contribute to the local healthcare landscape while having new experiences in ways I never imagined. I do miss family, and the cat, but I’m determined to enjoy every minute.

The Cayman Islands are a British Overseas Territory in the Western Caribbean about a one-hour flight west of Jamaica and similar south of Florida. There is a daily direct 12-hour flight from London. There are three islands and more than 95% of the population live on Grand Cayman, similar in size and population to Jersey (about 80,000). Healthcare is a mixed public and private insurance model. The islands are a major centre for financial services and a tourist destination.

I work at the Doctors Hospital in George Town and with our community clinics. The climate is tropical and usually 28-32 Celsius every day

of the year. We have a hurricane season June to November so when we lockdown I sleep at the hospital to make sure we can look after our patients. I am in this clip (on the right) from Hurricane Beryl doing roll call as we locked down.

Some of my most rewarding experiences have been working closely with the community here. I’ve had the privilege of mentoring a high school student, sparking their interest and providing them with guidance as they consider careers in healthcare. In addition, I’ve been actively involved in creating student nurse placements for the first time where I work.

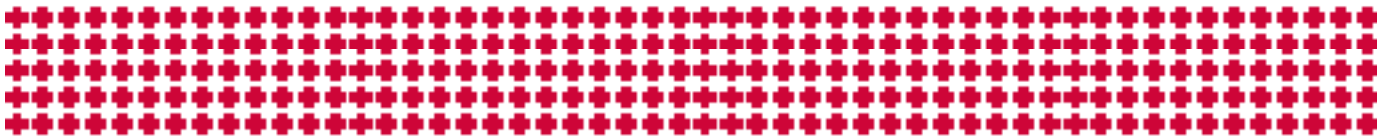
My work with the local hospice has been particularly meaningful having been a hospice trustee back in Cheshire. I am also supporting the medics in the recently formed Cayman Island Regiment with developing clinical competencies. Being a former Captain in the QARANC, this is incredibly important to me.

Within my day job, my role has evolved significantly. I’ve taken on leadership in areas such as patient experience, accreditation, safeguarding, incident management, and nurse development amongst others. All of which give me the opportunity to use my broad experience and make a difference over here.

In April of this year, I had the honour of presenting at the University’s first-ever Nursing and Midwifery Symposium. This was a milestone event, and it allowed me to form valuable connections with fellow healthcare professionals.

Building on these relationships, I am now leading a Delphi study focused on nurse career development and the barriers that nurses in the Cayman Islands face. This research is vital, as it will provide insight into how we can better support nurses in advancing their careers and addressing systemic challenges.

Perhaps one of the most exciting developments

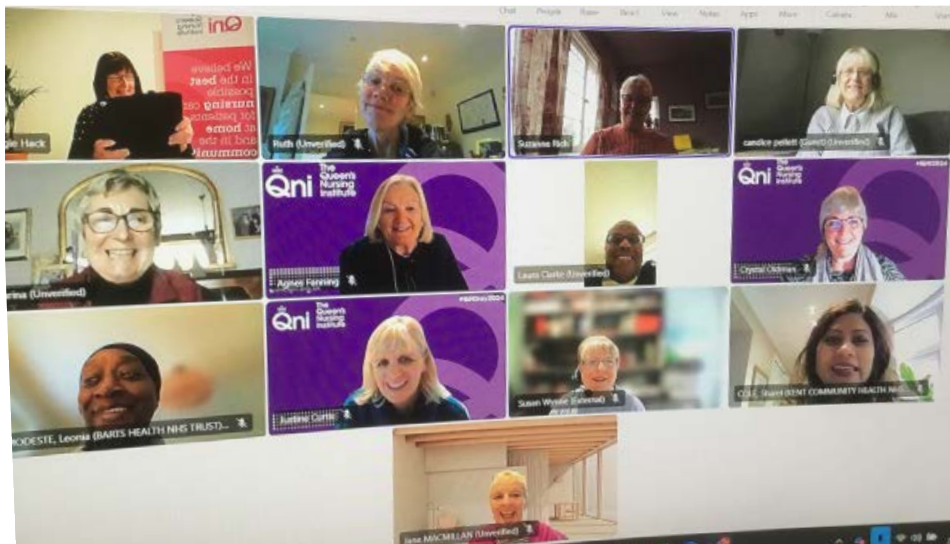


of the year came just a few weeks ago, when I was elected President of the Cayman Islands Nursing and Midwifery Association. This new role allows me to represent nurses across the three islands and internationally, giving me a platform to advocate for the profession and influence policy. As I write, I have just returned from Guyana where I represented the Cayman Islands at a Caribbean wide nurses meeting. Looking back on this incredible year, I am filled with gratitude for the opportunities to serve, and

make a lasting impact on, nursing in the Cayman Islands. The journey has been exciting, and, towards the end of my career now, I am excited to see what the future holds in this beautiful setting. Having my nursing connections in UK helps me a lot with feeling connected. I value that. I was thinking I would slow down a little here in the Caribbean, but I guess that can wait a while....

Helen Kirk, Queen's Nurse

Keep in Touch Volunteers Meeting



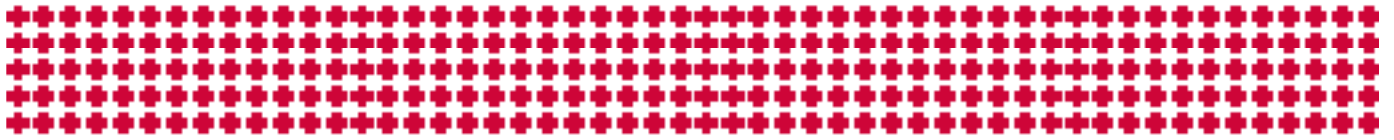
The Keep In Touch (KIT) Team meets up bi-annually – one face-to-face event and one online meeting. These meetings provide an opportunity for volunteers to share their experiences as part of KIT, and to discuss any concerns, as well as meet up with other volunteers.

This year the Team again met up in London. The event was well-attended, and everyone enjoyed seeing old friends and meeting new ones.

In November we held two online KIT meetings on Saturday mornings. We were delighted that the QNI's CEO, Dr Crystal Oldman CBE, was able to attend both meetings and provide an update on current and future QNI activities, as well as thank the volunteers for their continued commitment to the KIT programme.

The KIT programme has been running since 2016, and quite a few of our volunteers have been calling their contact since the beginning, leading to some wonderful friendships. Most of the Team were able to attend one of the meetings, and we are looking forward to our next meeting in May 2025, which will again be a face to-face event in London.

Suzanne Rich, KIT Programme Manager



Queen's Nurse regional meeting in Sedgwick House Park

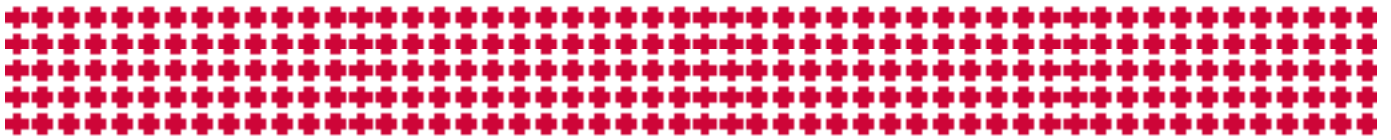


Queen's Nurse Julia Fairhall organised an afternoon at Sedgwick Park House, West Sussex, for the regional Queen's Nurse meeting.

Clare gave us use of her house and the gardens which were a spectacular space for a reflective period after the meeting.'

'It was great networking together, but also so lovely to support The National Garden Scheme in such a wonderful venue and gardens. We were so welcomed by Clare the owner, I think eventually there was 35 of us that attended,

Julia even made some cupcakes with an (edible!) Queen's Nurse logo on them, see photo above. 'I was pleased with how the cakes turned out I made (thank you for the logo) there were none left funnily enough.'



A view from a Queen's Nurse - QNI Leadership Programme



After 26 years of nursing and 19 years of working within community settings, in 2021 I was thrilled and honoured to become a Queen's Nurse and receive a QNI award in leadership after completing the Aspiring Leaders Programme (rebranded as Ambition to Lead in 2024). As a Queen's Nurse, I can raise the profile of leadership and continue to advocate for community nursing.

What led me to this journey? I received the monthly QNI newsletters and saw the call for applications for the QNI leadership programmes. I thought, why not apply and see what happens?

A couple of weeks later, I was invited to an online interview. A handful of places for all the community nurses in the UK—it felt like winning the lottery! Imposter syndrome crept in while I waited for the interview—who was I to imagine I'd be chosen?

The day arrived, and fortunately, I was now familiar with Microsoft Teams. The panel of three asked questions focused on leadership personal to me—nothing I could prepare for. I finished the 30-minute call with the QNI team, closing with, "We'll be in touch." When the email arrived confirming my place, I was delighted, though

imposter syndrome snuck in again—surely the others were further along their leadership journeys.

In October 2023, I attended an online induction, meeting other successful candidates. November arrived, and I drove to a hotel in the South of England for a 3-day programme with 13 strangers (#lucky13 on X/Twitter) who became a professional network and lifelong friends. Over the next few days, we learned to think differently and opened up personally and professionally. By the end of the course, I believed in its magic—with a buddy, mentor, and guiding words, I was ready to take my next leadership steps.

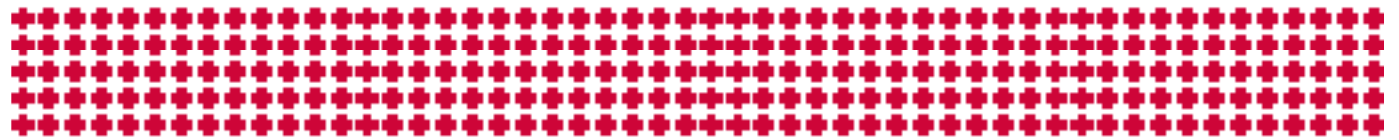
During the year-long programme, which included study days and online catch-ups, I faced my imposter syndrome and gained newfound confidence in my abilities. I learned strategies to manage my leadership journey realistically.

I also led a project in Hospital at Home, supporting 2-hour urgent crisis care. I helped develop a telephone pathway for care homes in West Cheshire to contact us directly 7 days a week, reducing 40% of Emergency Department admissions. This was life-changing for some of the frailest people in the community. NHS England published the project, and I was invited to speak nationally to help cascade the idea.

The programme gave me the skills to refine the project by using costings, writing papers, and understanding wider NHS systems to articulate quality improvement needs.

What's next? I now have a new post, am growing as a leader, and consolidating my time on the QNI Aspiring Leaders Programme. My next step is to tackle my imposter syndrome and apply for the QNI Leading Strategically Programme. My advice: aim high, be bold, and apply for one of the QNI programmes—you never know where it may take you.

Alex James, Queen's Nurse



Recognising the Legacy of Black Bermudian Nurses



Photos, above left: Leonie Harford; above right: Caro Spencer-Wilson as a newly qualified nurse in 1929; left: Gilbert and Perry in the UK as student nurses in 1955



when Bermuda's only hospital, the King Edward Memorial Hospital (KEMH) opened in 1920, their training programme was open to white nurses only. Midwifery in black communities was learnt through experiences passed down generations in families, and training was limited to a small local programme at the Bermuda Nursing Home, which included a fourth graduate year at Lincoln Hospital School in New York. Many black Bermudians would go directly to the US to train, hoping to return home and work in Bermuda as qualified nurses.

However, upon their return, KEMH did not accept them, giving the excuse that American training was inferior, or – shamefully – claiming that tourists would be offended by them. For the first half of the twentieth century, employment

Today, nursing workforces are often incredibly diverse and international, yet historically not all nurses have had equal opportunities. Neither have their work and stories been appreciated equally, both in the UK and more widely.

Black History Month this year focused on the theme, "Reclaiming Narratives", an opportunity to remember and take inspiration from these nurses who despite facing obstacles, carried out trailblazing work, paving the way for a better environment for all.

Based on research by Meredith Ebbin and Cecille Snaith-Simmons, and also from conversations with them, this article focuses on the journey that led to black Bermudians being able to work as district nurses and in hospitals in Bermuda.

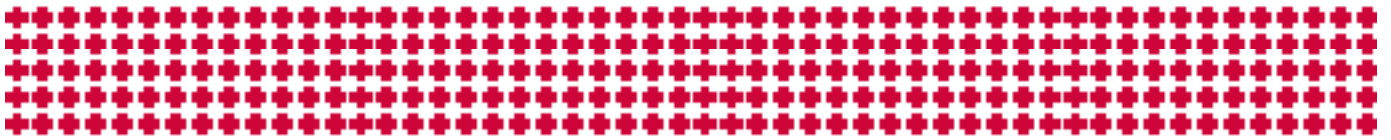
Although slavery was abolished in Bermuda in 1834, racial segregation continued until the formal desegregation of Bermudian schools in the late 1960s. For nursing, this meant that

opportunities for black Bermudians were limited to the Bermuda Nursing Home, or to private duty nursing.

District Nursing

Similarly, for district nursing, which was managed by the Bermuda Welfare Society (BWS), there was a requirement to have a Queen's Nurse (QN) qualification, which effectively barred US-trained Bermudian nurses from employment. The introduction of a written midwifery examination in 1927 also discriminated against informally trained black midwives.

Despite this, Bermudian nurses persisted; the Bermuda Graduate Nurses' Association was formed as a place for black nurses to share their ideas, and support each other in what was a racially charged climate. Members would hold meetings in their homes, and together they shared a determination to be able to work as nurses in their own communities.



In the 1950s, a younger generation of nurses were returning from training in England. Many were not offered roles which matched their levels of training, but Barbara Wade became the first black registered nurse employed by KEMH in 1958.

The return of this next generation also created a desire to be involved with international nursing groups. This ultimately led to the amalgamation of the Bermuda Graduate and KEMH Nurses' Associations in 1967, as the International Council of Nurses limited membership to one organisation per country.

Nurses Cecille Snaith-Simmons and Caro Spencer-Wilson, along with their legal representative Dame Lois-Browne Evans made up the team which helped draw up the constitution for the new, singular nurses' association. Cecille recalls the charged atmosphere of these meetings:

"The contention was caused because of the racial climate at the time which believed we were less than and deserved less than the white nurses. Nevertheless, we fought on and in the end the Association was formed and became the Bermuda Registered Association, now known as the Bermuda Nurses' Association."

In district nursing, the picture was similar. Despite the BWS requiring a QN qualification, throughout the 1950s there was a white Bermudian nurse employed as a midwife and district nurse who had no general training. Waiting until her retirement, Leonie Harford, who had returned to Bermuda as a QN around this time, became the first black Bermudian to be employed as a district nurse by the BWS in 1963.

Sandra Allen was then employed by the BWS in 1966 without a QN qualification, followed by Cecille Snaith-Simmons in 1967. However, they still experienced discrimination, described by Cecille when she first joined the team:

"I experienced some difficulties. The white patients felt that I should always come to the back door to enter their homes. This was not a situation that I was prepared to accept and so I frequently had to let the referring doctors know that although

I was wearing a white uniform, I was not the maid, and very quickly the word spread that the nurse did not go to back doors. For three months I remained unpaid as the Treasurer felt I should only be admitted through her back door."

Despite experiences like these, these nurses' persistence, along with the unification of the two segregated nurses' associations in 1967 meant that the environment was changing. Black nurses could now work at KEMH, and the BWS was taken over by the Bermudian Department of Health in the 1970s.

Within this narrative, the following nurses represent some (but not all) of the key figures, whose pioneering work enabled the much-needed changes that followed.

The nurses who were part of the first generation of Bermudians to train in the UK and USA left their homes and families and undertook huge journeys, despite knowing that KEMH was unlikely to offer them employment upon their return.

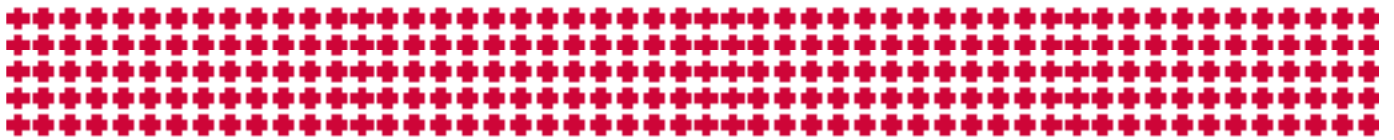
Through documenting these stories, we remember the legacy of the contributions made by these nurses. Their contributions to Black history and to world nursing history were felt in Bermuda the UK and USA. They deserve greater recognition than what they were given in their time.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank both Cecille Snaith-Simmons and Meredith Ebbin for their assistance and enthusiasm towards the research for this article. More information on Bermuda's nursing history, can be found both at Meredith's website: <https://www.bermudabiographies.bm/>, and also in Cecille's various articles for The Royal Gazette: <https://tinyurl.com/535wzpx64>

To read the full article, please go to : <https://tinyurl.com/4h2uwxwk>

Violet Trevelyan-Clark, QNI Intern



2025 Snowdrop and Spring Flower garden openings



The 2025 Snowdrop and Spring Flower garden openings will see over 100 gardens open for our funder, the National Garden Scheme, throughout January and February.

From swathes of snowy white blooms to colourful mixtures of aconites, hellebores, iris

and crocus under early blossom there is a garden visit to lift your spirits as the year begins.

The full listing for 2025 garden openings is now live – to explore further go to:

<https://ngs.org.uk/dates-for-your-diary-early-openers-2025/>

Tea & Cake fundraising



funds for people living with cancer, and Ann stunned me with her amazing fundraising endeavours. The main theme is baking and cake-making and Ann, who is a star baker, hosted a coffee morning at her home on her own birthday.

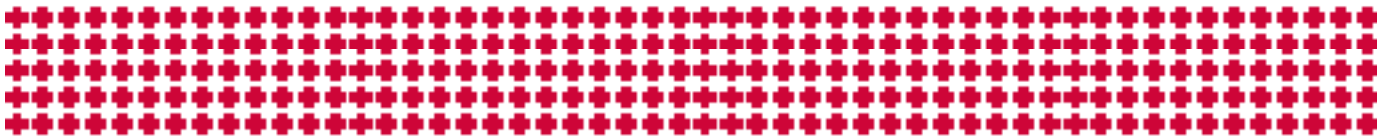
Between all her cake-baking activities and co-ordination of others, Ann raised a total of £738 for Macmillan. What an amazing effort! I was truly blown away with her motivation and enthusiasm to raise this incredible amount. Macmillan are very grateful of all her fundraising efforts, and Ann is awaiting a certificate to reward her for all her hard work. I wanted everyone to hear about Ann's endeavours and to celebrate her success.

Thank you so much, Ann. You're a true star.

Angela Williams, Keep In Touch Volunteer

I am a KiT volunteer and have been in touch with my contact, Ann for many years - Ann is a retired district nurse. We try to speak to each other once a week, when time allows, through the KiT (Keep In Touch) programme at the QNI.

This year Ann was determined to raise funds for the Macmillan Coffee Morning event, raising



Allyson Kent, Queen's Nurse 25/6/1963 - 19/10/2024



word you say to a sick vulnerable person has power. There is no such thing as a throw-away comment – once it's heard by someone it's too late. We can and must be honest and truthful but sensitive and empathic, we can always explain what we're going to do before we do it.'

Professor John Unsworth OBE, Chair of the QNI said, 'We were so saddened to hear of Allyson's passing. She was a true inspiration. She leaves behind an incredible legacy: her compelling film raising awareness and advocating for patients everywhere. She will be greatly missed.'

Queen's Nurses and Staff of the QNI were very saddened by the recent death of Queen's Nurse Allyson Kent.

Allyson had been living with ovarian cancer and raised a huge amount for Ovacome – the ovarian cancer charity. She started walking every day after her cancer diagnosis and enjoyed the mental and physical benefits it gave her. She also discovered Parkrun which she advocated for. You can read Allyson's blog about walking a marathon every week here.

Moved by her experience of living with cancer and how words impact the patient, Allyson created a powerful film with playwright Libby Pearson, called 'The Power of Words' or 'KPOW', featuring three other Queen's Nurses and funded by Macmillan. In Allyson's words, 'Every

Suzanne Rich, Support for Nurses Manager, the QNI said, 'Allyson joined the Keep in Touch Team in 2018 and was part of the programme for three years. Allyson's compassion, commitment and care, as well as her wonderful smile and sense of humour, made her an integral and highly respected member of the KIT Team. Allyson will be greatly missed by us all but always remembered as an inspirational member of our Team.'

You can watch Kpow here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=verXuKHUdtk>

We would like to express our sincere condolences to her family and friends at this very sad time. An obituary of Allyson's life will feature in the next issue of HomeVisit.



Eva Firth 6/7/1924 - 24/11/2024



Eva and her six brothers were all born in their house at West Mickley. Their mother Ethel was an enterprising business woman with a shop selling general stores and sweets in West Mickley, who, when the family moved to Chopwell, bought the first washing machine in the village and took in washing to earn extra money. Eva took after her, and, in later years dreamed of owning her own nursing home.

In 1934, when Eva was ten, her mother died. John, the eldest, had already gone out to relatives in Canada to establish a new life for them. Their mother thought they would have a better life there, out of the coal mines. Eva's emigration papers were in place in 1940 - she was to have been the next one to leave but plans changed. The family had a housekeeper, but Eva and her brothers each had their allocated household jobs - she said her first job was at the age of 14, when their housekeeper left, and she took on the role.

Eva grew up under the careful eyes of Herb, her eldest brother in the UK, and brothers Bill, Jim, Dan and Joe. When their father re-married, she went to live for a time with her aunt Tamar (Ta)

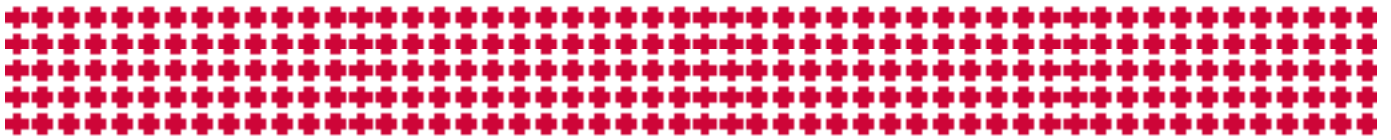
and uncle Joe and made Ta, also a good business woman, her role model. Eva's brothers were always very protective of her and she them - she had written them letters during the war to keep them in touch with home. Their familial relationships stayed deep throughout their lives. When her brother Bill came back from the war, he gave her the semi-precious stones he had been given by grateful Burmese villagers in thanks for all his help to them. At her 80th birthday party Eva presented Bill's wife Ann and all her nieces with them, made into jewellery.

Eva enjoyed school, and read all the classics at home. Her interest in history and geography never left her. Her special early childhood friend was Jean Gordon - they were the same age and never lost touch with each other. Jean was one of the people Eva talked of in her last days. Jean died just before she reached her 100th birthday and her daughter says she was still talking about Eva until then.

Eva wanted to become a nurse, but because she had no formal educational qualifications, she had to sit exams in English and Maths. She passed those and, with a glowing character reference from their Methodist Minister, she was accepted for preliminary training in Walkergate Fevers Hospital in Newcastle just before the NHS was formed. In 1949 she qualified as an SRN at Sunderland General Hospital.

Eva met her husband Harry when he was at the Merchant Navy Training School in South Shields, Co Durham, and they married in 1947. When Harry left the Merchant Navy, they moved to Brampton in South Yorkshire and she became a loved and supportive member of the family there. When her cousin Ethel moved into a care home Eva looked after her and her affairs.

Eva worked at Kendray Fever Hospital, Doncaster, for a short while then took up a post as a District Nurse in Swinton in November 1949, working for what was then West Riding Health Authority. She did her rounds on foot and by bus, then a



bike, and was later given a car. Eva loved her job and was nominated to become a Queen's Nurse in recognition of her outstanding contribution to the community. She was greatly honoured to be chosen to meet the late Queen Mother at St James's Palace London, on 10th July 1997. One of her outstanding memories is of their personal chat about their shared childhood roots in the North East.

Eva and Harry had a long happy life together. They had worked hard and were able to build their own dream house to Harry's design, which they enjoyed together for many years. UK holidays were often on the Norfolk Broads with family and friends but they also enjoyed cruises. The one that seemed to stand out was to New York on the Queen Mary. She loved buying elegant evening dresses for their formal dinners at the Captain's table.

Eva became an outstanding needlewoman. Everyone – family, friends and her church have mementos of her needlework- embroidery, patchwork, crochet, knitting and quilting. In 1979 Eva retired, but their retirement plans, possibly buying their own boat on the Norfolk Broads, were sadly curtailed when Harry had a heart attack. He died in 1988 after 8 years of her devoted care - she missed him greatly. She said they had been best friends as well as husband and wife.

Several years later Eva decided to do what her aunt Tamar had done and choose a more practical home. She knew Highfield Court Anchor Home in Swinton from visiting her old nursing friend Betty there, so she picked out the apartment she liked, and when it became available, moved in. Eva was contented and had hoped to end her days there. She had had wonderful help from Clare, a friend from church, who took on a carer role. But even with this and the additional care from a care company, she acknowledged that her physical health issues dictated the time had come to choose a final more appropriate home with full time care. So, after 17 independent years, she

moved into The Abbeyes and made herself at home there.

Eva had many regular visitors, local and far and she continued to keep in touch with everyone by phone, but they all knew to avoid 11am on Sunday mornings as that was when she and Margaret, a friend of more than 70 years, had their weekly chats. Eva and the Abbeyes staff became good friends and very fond of each other.

This, Eva's 100th year, was an especially eventful one – she went on several outings including a shopping expedition, picnic by a local lake, a canal boat trip, fish and chips at the seaside and a steam train visit. She also very much enjoyed being one of the residents chosen to be part of the team to interview potential new staff.

Eva's was a family with big dreams but with feet firmly planted on the ground - living had to include plans for end-of-life years. So, she chose when it was time to leave her home and move into an independent living apartment, and she chose when it was time to move into a care home.

Eva was the member of the family who we all kept in touch with, so she became the family newsagent – it was her role. So, after her 100th Birthday party, when I told her that her great niece Catherine had been inspired to ensure we continued to keep in touch, and that we are now having lunches together with grandchildren too, she was thrilled. She had found her legacy to us all - her life's role had come full circle.

Eva was a unique member of the family – one relative said: "Our beloved Aunt Eva - she was a strong, intelligent and very independent woman. Her no nonsense outlook to life was inspirational and she will be truly missed"

Among Eva's last words in the days before she died, she said "we are so lucky - we have been such a lovely family haven't we?"

Eileen Westmuckett, Eva's niece



Joan Kerr Winstanley 29/6/1934 - 6/9/2024



where she also lived, and would be seen and waved to by passers-by, who would always comment about her little Pekingese who sat on the back shelf of the car.

In those days nursing was very different and Mum knew her patients extremely well, along with their families. As a child I often went to work with my mum and would travel around with her as she visited her patients. Mum took early retirement and, although she had been a dedicated nurse, she thoroughly enjoyed her 35 years of retirement, spending time walking her dogs, bowling, socialising and line dancing.

Photos left to right: above left: Joan Kerr Winstanley; bottom left: Joan in her younger days; bottom right: Joan's daughter, Julie Ryder, collecting her Queen's Nurse badge and certificate from Dame Donna Kinnair in 2010.

My mother, Joan Kerr Winstanley, was born on the 29th June 1934 in Standish Lower Ground, Wigan.

Mum started her nurse training at The Royal Albert Edward Infirmary in 1954 and qualified as a state registered nurse in 1957. In 1960 she completed her Queen's District Nursing training.

Mum would go to work on her push bike complete with her nursing bag, wearing her hat and mac. She later progressed to travelling by car and became the sister in charge at Orrell Clinic.

Mum was well known across her nursing patch,

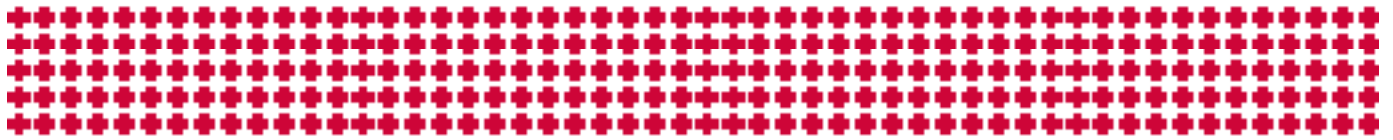
In 1955 Mum married my father, Bill – sadly he passed away in 2013. I have an elder brother, David, and Mum has three grandchildren and

two great-grandchildren. I followed my mother into nursing and became a Queen's Nurse.

Mum was a very determined and strong lady right until the end of her life. Mum sadly passed away after falling and fracturing her hip, then recovering from this to become unwell and hospitalised.

Mum passed away on the 6th September with her daughter and granddaughter by her side. She will be loved and remembered by many and she is missed terribly by us all.

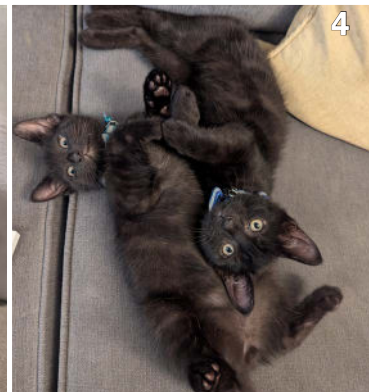
Julie Ryder, Queen's Nurse



Pet's Corner

Our Pet's Corner is back! If you would like to feature your pet, we would love to hear from you! Please email a photo (including your pet's name) to suzanne.rich@qni.org.uk.

1. Ann Lee, a member of the QNI's Keep in Touch programme has sent in a photo of her cat, Molly.
2. Queen's Nurse, Simon Littlefield's dog, Neil. Neil is 13 years old, 'He rather enjoys surveying and being pampered!'
3. New QNI member of staff, Denise Austin's dog, Stitch, is 'very excitable and outgoing. He's 11 months' old with a big personality. He likes to dance and his favourite game is Tag. He's celiac so he's not allowed grains but loves all foods, especially chicken and eggs. He hates fruits and veg with the exception of smoothies. He loves banana smoothies, almost as much as our neighbour/his girlfriend Rue.'
4. New QNI member of staff, Natalie Fedden's six month old kittens, Kenji and Coco. 'Kenji is affectionate, sociable, and mischievous. Loves food, plucking mum and dad's new carpet, and sleeping with one paw on someone is a must! Coco is sassy, independent, and introspective. Loves hiding in every nook available, chasing a ball of tin foil, or strutting around with important business to attend to!'



Easyfundraising for the QNI over the Christmas season

Easyfundraising is the UK's biggest online charity shopping site. Easyfundraising partners with over 7,000 brands who will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the brand you're shopping from.

If you would like to find out more and choose the QNI as your chosen charity over this Christmas period, please go to: www.easyfundraising.org.uk. Thank you!

Feedback

We would love to know what you like (or would like less of!) about the newsletter, and if you would like to send in any reminiscences, we would be delighted to feature them. Please email us at suzanne.rich@qni.org.uk, or write to Suzanne Rich, QNI, 1A Henrietta Place, London W1G 0LZ.

Please note: if you have recently changed address, please let us know by emailing us at mail@qni.org.uk.

QNI News as it happens - online



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