



2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR

AWARDS PROGRAMME

16 JUNE 2022
CULLODEN HOTEL
HOLLYWOOD



Royal College
of Nursing
Northern Ireland



A CELEBRATION OF NURSING





On behalf of the Royal College of Nursing in Northern Ireland, it is my great pleasure to welcome our finalists, their guests, our sponsors, members and distinguished guests to the 2022 Nurse of the Year Awards ceremony. It is wonderful to be back here at The Culloden once again for the first time in three years.

As ever, these awards provide the opportunity to highlight excellence within nursing in Northern Ireland and the contribution that nursing staff make to the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland. Despite the ever-challenging environment, this year's finalists demonstrate how nurses in Northern Ireland are leading the way in delivering high quality, innovative and person-centred care, contributing to and leading the strategic objectives of transformation and co-production. This year, the finalists also personify the exceptional contribution made by nursing staff throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, demonstrating unprecedented and almost unimaginable level of selflessness, bravery, professional expertise and dedication. Many of the entries reflect the ways in which nurses have adapted to the pandemic in order to develop and implement innovative solutions to delivering and improving patient care, often under the most difficult of circumstances. I am delighted to see that our finalists are drawn from a broad diversity of practice and education settings right across Northern Ireland, reflecting the many different fields of professional practice in which RCN members serve.

Sadly, once again, we are celebrating the achievements of our wonderful finalists and their contribution to nursing excellence against a background of political deadlock in Northern Ireland. The RCN has made its views on this very clear over the last few weeks. We need strong and accountable political leadership in order to continue to address the profound crisis affecting health and social care. Above all, this requires the formation of an Executive and a functioning Assembly, with the Minister for Health empowered to make the key strategic decisions that need to be taken. Nurses have not been found wanting, particularly over the last two years. It is now time for all our elected politicians to step up and show the same level of commitment to the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland.

I would like to thank all of our sponsors. You are most welcome here this evening and I hope that you will find the occasion to be rewarding. I would encourage all our guests to discover more about our sponsors through reading the information in this programme and by talking to the representatives who are here with us tonight. I am most grateful, as ever, to the judges for the various award categories, who have contributed their time and expertise in order to ensure that we appropriately reflect the excellence, innovation and diversity that exist within nursing in Northern Ireland.

On behalf of the members of the Royal College of Nursing, I convey my admiration and very best wishes to all our finalists and I wish you all a most enjoyable and productive evening.

Fiona Devlin

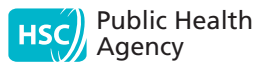
RCN Northern Ireland Board Chair

OUR SPONSORS



The Open University

The Open University is proud to sponsor the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Learning in Practice Award again this year. This award recognises the excellent teaching and learning that takes place in a range of acute and community settings in Northern Ireland. Student nurses gain invaluable learning experience whilst in clinical practice, supported by mentors, practice supervisors, managers and practice education teams. Working in partnership with the Department of Health, the health and social care trusts and the independent sector, The Open University offers an alternative route into nursing, enabling health care assistants and other support workers to study part-time, while also continuing to work in their substantive roles.



Public Health Agency

The Public Health Agency drives the public health and social well-being agenda in Northern Ireland. It provides a sustained focus to achieving key public health goals and reducing health inequalities. The broad functions of the Public Health Agency are health improvement, health protection, reducing inequalities, improving quality, safety and experience of services, and supporting personal and public involvement.



Inspire

Inspire is an all-island charity and social enterprise and our aim is wellbeing for all. We work together with people living with mental ill health, intellectual disability, autism and addictions to ensure they live with dignity and realise their full potential. We campaign to create a society free from stigma and discrimination with a culture of compassion that focuses on people and their abilities

MENTAL HEALTH AND ADDICTION CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES:

Our mental health and addiction services focus on inclusion by providing recovery based support in communities.

INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AND AUTISM CARE AND SUPPORT SERVICES

Our intellectual disability and autism services are built around the people we support and empower people to live independently as part of their community.

THERAPEUTIC AND WELLBEING SERVICES

Our therapeutic and wellbeing services provide a range of wellbeing support services, training and interventions that help organisations, employees and students to thrive.

INSIGHT, ENGAGEMENT AND INNOVATION

Our Insight, Engagement and Innovation team aims to amplify the voices of the people who use our services to inform and shape wider society through campaigning, research and the development of new services.



Roberta Brownlee and Silverdale Care Home

Roberta Brownlee is the owner of Silverdale Care Home in Castlederg, County Tyrone. Her innovative and strategic leadership enabled her to progress through a distinguished career to become the chief executive of the largest privately-owned health care group in the UK. Roberta has held a firm belief in the importance of strong nurse leadership from early in her career and in 2015 was awarded the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Outstanding Achievement Award for her outstanding leadership ability spanning some 44 years. In 2019, Roberta was awarded an MBE in the New Year's Honours list for her outstanding charity work, which spans 40 years, alongside her significant contribution to health and social care, particularly in her role as Chair of the Southern HSC Trust. Silverdale Care Home provides extensive care for patients with complex nursing needs and is renowned for the quality of care delivered within innovative, evidence-based models. Silverdale has won many quality awards and, in 2013, home manager Geraldine Browne won the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Award for working alongside local general practitioners in Castlederg to develop a model of care that reduced the number of patients experiencing unnecessary transfers to hospital. The management team at Silverdale is committed to continued innovation with a strong emphasis on quality, safety and person-centred care.



Balmoral Healthcare

Balmoral Healthcare are delighted to sponsor the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Independent Sector Award for 2022, a newly introduced category that we are proud to be supporting. Balmoral Healthcare is one of Northern Ireland's leading healthcare agencies. Founded by Amanda McCully and acquired by Kieran McCormick in 2021, both registered nurses, Kieran continues to run the company with the same dedication and passion for nursing which first inspired the establishment of the business in 2000.

For the past 22 years, we have been building on our excellent reputation for recruiting only the highest calibre of Registered Nurses, Paramedics, Senior Care Assistants and Healthcare Assistants. High nursing standards and values along with a committed focus to patient safety and person-centred care is at the heart of Balmoral Healthcare, filling thousands of vacancies each year and striving to ensure safe staffing levels are continued, we take pride in the excellent service and support we provide to our public and private sector clients.



Defence Relationship Management

The uniformed and civilian medical and dental personnel from all three services are known collectively as the Defence Medical Services [DMS]. The primary role of the DMS is to promote, protect and restore the health of service personnel to ensure that they are ready and medically fit to go where they are required in the UK and throughout the world. The DMS encompasses the entire medical, nursing, dental, allied health professional, paramedic and support personnel. Nurses make up the largest cadre of personnel within the DMS. In addition to the generalist nurse, the DMS recruits nurses from specialities including (but not limited to) emergency nursing, critical care, primary care, burns and plastics, perioperative practice, paediatrics and mental health. These nurses are trained to the highest level and are prepared to deploy anywhere in the world and in any environment as part of a military exercise or humanitarian mission. In Northern Ireland, the four Reserve units that employ nurses are the Royal Navy Reserve: HMS Hibernia, the Army Reserve: 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital and 253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment, and the Royal Auxiliary Air Force: 502 (Ulster) Squadron.

OUR SPONSORS



Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery

The Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery [NIPEC] is delighted to sponsor once again the prestigious Outstanding Achievement Award. NIPEC aims to improve standards of practice, education and professional development for nurses and midwives in order to facilitate their delivery of safe, effective and person-centred care. NIPEC also provides advice and information on matters relating to nursing and midwifery. NIPEC is committed to effective positive partnership working and establishing, forming and maintaining collaboration and strategic alliances with a wide range of stakeholders, partners, agencies and sectors in order to meet its aims.



Ulster University

Ulster University's School of Nursing and Paramedic Science has been leading graduate nurse education for over 40 years and has a strong culture of scholarship and high-quality teaching. It continues to be ranked in the top ten Schools of Nursing in the UK, according to the QS world rankings for nursing. It is widely recognised for its pioneering nursing research, which improves the care of patients, their families and communities, as well as producing inspirational nursing graduates who become major leaders in their profession. The Institute of Nursing and Health Research at Ulster University, which forms a key component of the School of Nursing and Paramedic Science, is involved in world-leading research and development that enhances the knowledge, expertise and engaged scholarship of nursing, midwifery, public health and the allied health professions. The RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Nursing Research Award, which is proudly sponsored by the School of Nursing and Paramedic Science at Ulster University, celebrates the achievements of nurses who have undertaken high quality research that has a positive impact on the nursing care provided.



Patient and Client Council

The Patient and Client Council provides a powerful independent voice for the public. Its work is based on speaking directly to people and listening to their opinions, experiences and hopes about health and social care. This information is used by decision-makers to help make changes to the way that services are provided.



The Queen's University of Belfast

The School of Nursing and Midwifery at the Queen's University of Belfast offers an award-winning educational experience that seeks to innovate delivery models and meet the needs of modern healthcare. It provides full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in all the disciplines of nursing and midwifery. In 2021 the School launched an exciting two-year Graduate entry Masters pathway inclusive of NMC registration, for applicants with an existing degree. Working in close collaboration with practice partners in state of the art facilities, students are prepared to lead and deliver high quality health care, both locally and internationally. The school is honoured to celebrate the achievements of exceptional students once again, through sponsorship of the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Student Award.



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**HSC Clinical Education Centre**

The HSC Clinical Education Centre exists to provide high quality in-service education to nurses, midwives and allied health professionals employed in the HSC trusts. It also provides consultancy to a variety of other organisations from the statutory, voluntary, community and independent sectors. The centre's key aim is to be responsive to the needs of its clients, delivering programmes that are informed by the best available evidence, maximise the use of modern educational approaches, and are delivered by highly-skilled professionally-registered teaching staff.

Northern Ireland Ambulance Service

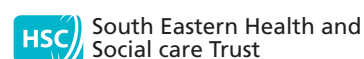
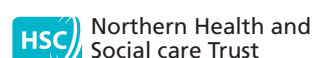
The Northern Ireland Ambulance Service exists to improve the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland. We apply the highest levels of knowledge and skill to preserve life, prevent deterioration and promote recovery. We touch lives at times of basic human need, when care and compassion are what matter most. Our dedicated, committed and highly skilled staff work 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to ensure that our patients receive the best possible care.



Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Northern Health and Social Care Trust
Southern Health and Social Care Trust South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust
Western Health and Social Care Trust

In 2020, the nursing profession was due to celebrate the year of the Nurse and Midwife, which also marked 200 years since the birth of Florence Nightingale. In recognition of this important event, the Directors of Nursing in the five health and social care trusts have created an award to recognise nurses and midwives in leadership roles, at lead level, who have demonstrated a passion for developing their leadership, professionalism, innovation and creativity alongside effective influencing skills.

The five health and social care trusts provide integrated health and social care services across Northern Ireland. Each trust manages and administers hospitals, the delivery of health care in community settings, health centres, residential homes, day centres and other health and social care facilities, providing a wide range of services. The Director of Nursing of each trust is responsible and accountable for the delivery of nursing and midwifery care and the RCN is grateful to them for supporting the inaugural Directors of Nursing Award.



STUDENT AWARD

Sponsored by the Queen's University of Belfast

Judges: Professor Karen McCutcheon, The Queen's University of Belfast; Barbara Brush, Patient and Client Council; Ruth Thompson, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Claire Stewart

The Queen's University of Belfast

Claire is a first year learning disability nursing student and began her studies in September 2021. From the start, she stood out as a strong advocate for people with a learning disability. An important aspect of this field of practice is positive interaction and communication. To help make health care more accessible for people with a learning disability, Claire started the Makaton Mondays initiative. Every Monday, Claire teaches one or two Makaton signs via a range of social media platforms. The purpose is to engage with fellow students as well as health professionals to show them how little time it can take to learn a new skill for the benefit of people with a learning disability. Claire's aim is that, by teaching these simple signs, health care will become more accessible. Her enthusiasm is contagious and the numbers of people following Makaton Mondays is growing. This is all the more impressive as Claire is entirely self-taught. She has recently applied for funding for further training in Makaton to increase her own knowledge base. Claire's nominator explains: "With this level of compassion and commitment already in evidence, I am excited to see how Claire progresses over the rest of her programme and as a nurse in the future. As a lecturer, it is encouraging when students engage with what they are learning and even more so when it inspires them to come up with initiatives to serve the population they will be working with."



Ashleigh Maynard

The Queen's University of Belfast

Ashleigh recently completed her degree and has now taken up her first nursing post. She has been an influential advocate for younger people experiencing bereavement. Ashleigh plays a leading role in Hope Again, the youth website of Cruse Bereavement Support. In her free time, she responds to and signposts children and young people, parents and professionals to support within Cruse and external sources if appropriate. Ashleigh has worked with hard-to-reach populations experiencing bereavement, including the facilitation of face-to-face workshops with boys and young men who have lost a loved one. She provided education to student teachers at Stranmillis University College about how they can signpost to appropriate support. Ashleigh has also translated these important messages into her nursing practice. During her final placement in a haematology ward, Ashleigh experienced multiple deaths. With her expertise in grief, she was able to run informal debriefing sessions with other nursing students within the clinical area. This improved coping and resilience. Ashleigh has raised awareness about the need for enhanced bereavement services and increased understanding of how to support bereaved children and young people through conference presentations, videos, written blogs, newspaper interviews, literature reviews, university campaigns and money raising. Ashleigh's nominator describes her as "compassionate and inspiring", adding that she actively demonstrates best practice and seeks to improve the quality of life for patients, colleagues and the public.

NURSING RESEARCH AWARD

Sponsored by Ulster University

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Judges: Professor Sonja McIlfatrick, Ulster University; Gillian McCorkell, RCN Northern Ireland Research and Quality Network; Lynn Woolsey, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Dr Deirdre O'Donnell

Senior lecturer in nursing
Ulster University

Deirdre's focus is on the development of person-centred health care practitioners, which is central to the future of health care systems globally. Person-centred practice is synonymous with effective health care but embedding person-centred practice through nursing education has often been slow to progress. Deirdre's doctoral research examined pre-registration nursing students' understandings and perceptions of their person-centred practice and factors that influenced their learning. This was undertaken via the development of an instrument to measure students' perceptions of their person-centred practice, a survey of 532 students to test the instrument and measure students' perceptions, as well as focus groups with 30 students to illuminate their understandings of person-centred practice and factors that influenced their learning. Deirdre concluded that students' perceptions of their person-centred practice were positive from the end of their first year of study, with a statistically significant difference in scores by the end of their course. This supports the view that person-centred practice can be developed during pre-registration education. The aspects of practice that challenged students most in year one continued to do so throughout their course. These included being prepared to challenge others whose practice is not person-centred, leading initiatives in practice, and voicing an opinion during decision-making processes. By considering the integrated findings, Deirdre developed a conceptual model highlighting key considerations in supporting the education of future health care professionals in becoming person-centred practitioners. The findings have been disseminated through a range of academic publications and conference presentations. Future research will focus on how students who have experience of a person-centred curriculum apply their learning in practice both during their course and as new registrants.



Dr Marie O'Neill

Lecturer in nursing
Ulster University

Moving into a care home can be an emotional experience for older people and their families. Marie's study explored the experiences of 23 individuals at four different time points over the first year of their move to a care home. She found that participants often had limited involvement in decision-making about the move, resulting in feelings of disempowerment. In the weeks after the move, residents experienced an unsettling period and were often disillusioned by the loss of independence and autonomy. Towards the end of the first year, residents adapted to their new home while also valuing connections with their family. The study highlighted the importance of shared decision-making, continuity of care, and maintaining connections. Marie demonstrated the importance of open communication and the key role of health and social care staff in addressing the emotions and realities of moving to and living in a care home. She also highlighted how access to education, fair pay and career opportunities are key to attracting the right staff to work with older people. Above all, a care home is a home, a key principle on which all aspects of life in a care home should be based. Creating a homely environment in a regulated and often risk-averse setting can be challenging, whilst facilitating individual preferences and valuing former routines and connections can empower older people to settle. A number of papers have been published from Marie's study and a further two are under review. Her findings have also been shared at various international conferences.

DIRECTORS OF NURSING AWARD

Sponsored by the HSC trusts

Judges: Cathy McCusker, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC); Brenda Creaney, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; Siobhan Donald, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Denise Carroll

Head of service for child and adolescent mental health and autism spectrum disorders
Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Denise's nomination focuses on her passion for improving services for children and adults with autism, her ability to promote a culture of collective leadership, and her capacity to influence internal and external stakeholders. Denise co-ordinates the trust's autism service, which provides assessment and diagnostic care for children and young people, and intervention services for children, young people and adults up to the age of 30. Denise listened to the views of children, young people and parents, as well as those of the team. She then developed a range of initiatives that would not been achieved without her vision and influencing ability. These include a bespoke walled garden where children, young people and adults of all ages can access therapy. She also launched, with lottery funding, a business providing employment and training for young people. Denise and her team developed a video, with input from a family, explaining the service and the assessments that will be undertaken. She facilitated young people to attend a trust board meeting in order to shape and develop services. During the pandemic, Denise implemented virtual consultations, virtual web-based resources for children and families, social media messages to provide information and reassure families, and drop-in virtual groups for parents. In the words of her nominator: "Denise epitomises professionalism as she keeps children and families at the centre of her work while at the same time recognising the contribution made by her team and by other stakeholders, using her natural ability to communicate and her passion and drive to enthuse others".



Sharon McRoberts

Assistant Director
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

With lead responsibility for nursing regulation, workforce planning, education and development, and the nursing workforce, Sharon epitomises excellence in nursing leadership and a passion for nurses and nursing. She was the driver behind the move to regional recruitment for nursing students, inviting a number of students to the steering group, encouraging them to participate and ensuring their opinions were given due consideration. As the regional lead for international nurse recruitment, Sharon has ensured that the care and support offered to nurses is paramount and that staff feel valued when they arrive in the country. While she is a strong voice for nursing, she knows that the profession cannot act in a vacuum and has therefore built excellent partnerships with a range of stakeholders. This was evidenced by the close working relationships formed during the initial phase of the pandemic, when Sharon set up a COVID swabbing service and helpline with multidisciplinary teams right across the trust. She demonstrated excellent communication and leadership skills by bringing a new team together and delivering on the trust's agenda to support the operational areas. Sharon has worked closely with frontline staff during the pandemic to support them and offer professional advice. She is very aware of the challenges that have faced nurses and appreciates the difficulties facing many teams. As her nominator observes: "Sharon is passionate about developing others and creates opportunities for people to flourish. She is very self-aware and frequently reflects on how she can improve. Sharon does this through engaging with junior staff and listening to their opinions. She is not afraid of being challenged, creating a safe space for staff to have honest conversations."

HEALTH CARE SUPPORT WORKER AWARD

Sponsored by Liverpool Victoria

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Royal College of Nursing
Northern Ireland

Judges: Cathy McCusker, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC); Sharon McRoberts, South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust; Cherith Rogers, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Nicola Doherty

Nursing support worker
Western Health and Social Care Trust

Nicola works in the outpatient clinic in the North West Cancer Centre at Altnagelvin Hospital. She has extended her training to develop advanced clinical skills such as venepuncture, IV cannulation, urine testing, monitoring blood sugars, performing septic screens, and ECG recording. The outpatient setting is often the first encounter that patients and families have with cancer services staff. Patients are often scared and anxious when they attend but Nicola has a calming and reassuring presence, treating all patients with respect, dignity and compassion. As people are living longer, an increasing number of elderly patients who are often confused attend the clinic. Nicola deploys the skills that she learned in her previous role in a dementia care setting to ensure that these patients feel safe and protected. She works with the medical team to support patients who are having bone marrow procedures. This is often a frightening and uncomfortable experience but Nicola uses her effective communication skills to gain the trust of patients and ensure that they are supported physically and psychologically throughout the experience. Nicola's nominator pays tribute to how she will go the extra mile to support her nursing colleagues in the running of the clinic. She adds: "Nicola is an invaluable member of our team. She demonstrates kindness and compassion in all that she does. She is competent in her role and responsibilities, recognises her boundaries and works within her limitations. Nicola is so deserving of recognition for all her hard work and dedication. She truly is an asset to our nursing team."



Sandra Smyth

Senior nursing assistant
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Sandra supports the trust's district nursing team, embracing the challenge of being a lone worker supporting patients in their own home without the direct oversight of a registered nurse. Under a new model of multi-disciplinary team working, Sandra took on the role of project manager, helping to co-ordinate work schedules, communicate to teams, and facilitate a smooth transition to ensure continued high quality service delivery to the local population was maintained and enhanced. Sandra always puts the patient at the centre of care by doing those extra things that are so valuable, such as staying after her shift is finished to support patients who may be struggling when their health is not good. In addition, Sandra provided invaluable support to the COVID-19 vaccination programme, always ready to undertake an additional shift to help ensure that the programme was delivered to patients both at home and in trust facilities. She ensured that everything ran efficiently by painstakingly making up packs so that staff had everything at their fingertips and patients were cared for after their vaccine was given. As her nominator explains: "Sandra is recognised as a huge asset to the team. Living with COVID has not been easy. She always has a smile on her face and her positive work ethic has helped carry everyone she works with through difficult times and has lifted the team's spirit. Sandra continuously goes above and beyond, not only for her patients but also for her colleagues. Having Sandra in the team has been invaluable."

HEALTH CARE SUPPORT WORKER AWARD

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Ashton Rea

Care assistant supervisor
Parkmanor Oaks Care Home

Ashton's nominator commends her leadership skills, excellent standards of care, dedication to residents, and her personal development. During the darkest days of the pandemic, when residents died without families present, she sat with residents beyond the end of her shift to ensure they were not alone. When a resident died, she washed and dressed them and, with the help of her team, placed the body in the coffin as funeral directors were not permitted to do this at that time. Ashton also recognised the impact of the pandemic on residents and their families, ensuring residents have been able to maintain contact with those closest to them. Ashton ensures that the highest standards are maintained while supporting the team in their often emotionally challenging roles. Having witnessed first-hand the impact of the pandemic on staff mental health, she has created an environment where colleagues feel free to talk and be supportive towards one other. Ashton has helped many staff who are experiencing post-traumatic stress and has assisted with appropriate onward referrals. New staff frequently describe her as an inspiration; teaching, encouraging and motivating them in a safe, supportive environment, creating competent practitioners through practice-based learning. She led the implementation of a new care system, devising a training booklet and delivering group and individual sessions to ensure that staff fully understood the system. Ashton's nominator says: "She exudes good nature, compassion and commitment, and selflessly gives up much of her free time to organise and participate in activities for the residents".

PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Sponsored by the Public Health Agency

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Royal College of Nursing
Northern Ireland

Judges: Aidan Dawson, Public Health Agency; Ruth Thompson, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Andrew Doherty, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Carolann O'Hare

Health visitor
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Carolann's nomination focuses on her support for Syrian families relocating and settling within the Northern Trust area. She was appointed to support the Syrian families in 2018, since when around 55 families with children under the age of 18 years old have been welcomed to the area. Carolann has met each family to complete a family health assessment and build relationships to support their integration, both socially and emotionally. The families were visited initially in the Welcome Centre in Belfast and then in their family home. Carolann has worked in partnership with social services, health protection services, the Housing Executive, PSNI, interpreting services and education to support the health and well-being of this disadvantaged vulnerable group. She then developed a local drop-in clinic to support their health needs and provide information on the health services available to them in Northern Ireland. Before the pandemic, Carolann facilitated fun days at which the families were able to find out more about the wider support available. During the pandemic, she maintained contact and linked with various agencies to ensure that the families' health needs continued to be met. Carolann has attended relevant training and increased her knowledge of the vulnerable person relocation scheme [VPRS], passing on her expertise to colleagues. The partnership model between the VPRS and public health nursing can be replicated widely to support asylum seekers, refugees and people from Afghanistan and Ukraine seeking resettlement in Northern Ireland. As her nominator explains: "Carolann has gone above and beyond her role to ensure these families have all their needs met".



Alison Griffiths

Lead health protection nurse
Public Health Agency

Alison leads the health protection acute response team, which deals with health threats from infectious disease, chemical, radiation, biological and nuclear hazards. Alison responded to the significant demands that the COVID-19 pandemic placed on the team, leading on supporting care homes to prevent, contain and control over 1,500 outbreaks over the last two years. She built new partnerships with the independent sector, the HSC and other statutory bodies in order to do this. The impact cannot easily be measured but will have prevented a large number of deaths and serious illness. Alison worked closely with her counterparts across the UK, as well as with care home providers and representatives of residents, to ensure that tailored and evidence-based advice is given, which has evolved as the pandemic has changed and unfolded. The team she leads has more than tripled in number during the pandemic, and Alison has overseen the induction, training and development of nurses and doctors, as well as providing professional accountability and assurance to the nursing staff in the Northern Ireland contact tracing centre. Before the COVID-19 pandemic, Alison led on the prevention and control of blood-borne viruses in homeless people who inject drugs. In all her work, she goes above and beyond what is expected of her, visiting hostels to support residents and staff and making herself available outside working hours throughout the pandemic to support vulnerable groups. Alison's nominator says: "Her dedication to the nursing profession is unrivalled, and her positive attitude and enthusiasm have carried the team during these challenging times".

PUBLIC HEALTH AWARD

Sponsored by the Public Health Agency



Linsey Sheerin

Service manager
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Building an innovative collaboration between the health and justice sectors, Linsey has led the development and delivery of a transformed and nurse-led custody health care model, addressing the complex needs of some of the most vulnerable people in society. This includes promoting equity of access to services for people who find themselves in police custody with alcohol and drug dependence and mental health conditions. Under Linsey's leadership and vision, custody nurse practitioners [CNPs] now see more than 90% of detainees and have delivered a range of life-saving interventions, reduced the number of people needing to be taken to emergency departments by police officers, and provided health care pathways for those who struggle to manage their conditions. By ensuring that health care services are embedded within the criminal justice system, the service is able to play an active and progressive role in supporting the identification of infectious diseases and offering a range of vaccinations. Linsey has used her expert nursing knowledge, passion and vision to identify the unique contribution that nurses can make to the health benefits of this vulnerable population. She has developed a number of effective partnerships across a range of organisations, communities and service users to deliver health improvements and promote continuing development. As her nominator explains: "Linsey's personal and professional skills have ensured the success of this initiative and paved the way for nursing to influence and change the public health challenges across this vulnerable population".

INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH, ADDICTION OR INTELLECTUAL DISABILITY AWARD

Sponsored by Inspire

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Royal College of Nursing
Northern Ireland

Judges: Tracey Ritchie, Inspire Wellbeing Group; Cathy Malcolm, Patient and Client Council; Briege Quinn, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Denise Lyons

Governance lead, Healthcare in Prison team
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

People in custody are one of the most vulnerable groups of people accessing nursing care and often difficult to engage. Young men have said that they rarely, if ever, read health care leaflets. Denise has been nominated for leading the production of *Biz in the Pris*, a comic book first published in November 2019 informing staff and young people in custody of the dangers of recreational drug use and the experience of addiction. Denise brought together staff from different disciplines, sharing a vision of improving health care through a new medium and driving the initiative forward. Co-production with young men in Hydebank Wood College was key to the project and included significant input by a person with previous lived experience of prison and a psychology student. One of the young men directly involved in the production of the comic book is now a recovering addict and a mentor to others in prison. The young men involved in the publication have gained skills transferable to other areas of life. The number of incidents relating to self-harm and overdoses has fallen since the launch of the comic book. At the internal launch of *Biz in the Pris*, one of the young men said that he had experienced a better 'buzz' from the achievement and subsequent recognition than from taking drugs. As Denise's nominator concludes: "Increased awareness of the complex nature of addictions has improved empathy in caring for people with drug issues. It has significantly improved the education of young people in custody by the use of mentors; young men who are recovering addicts and to whom the other young men can relate."



Andrea Conway

Specialist behaviour nurse
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

The Iveagh Centre provides specialist multidisciplinary assessment and treatment for children and young people with a learning disability who may have additional mental health difficulties and may display associated behaviours of concern. The ethos is based on positive behaviour support to ensure children and young people have the best quality of life possible. Andrea, a registered learning disability nurse, has led numerous transformational initiatives that have improved outcomes. She developed and delivered a positive behaviour support training programme for all staff within Iveagh, ensuring appropriately skilled staff work within the service. During the pandemic, Andrea introduced an initiative to help children recognise staff when their faces were covered with masks. She has broken down barriers in enabling young people to access activities based upon their interests and spearheaded a number of social prescribing activities, such as sports days, animal therapy, equestrianism and fun information days with emergency services, which have supported reductions in the use of restrictive practices. Andrea also developed a person-centred resource for each of the young people, 'My Iveagh Times'. This has improved record keeping and data collection across the service and led to improved decision-making within the clinical team. It has also helped staff be better informed about the young people's needs and support plans whilst enabling young people to be more involved in the documenting of their care. These initiatives have produced a range of improvements to the quality of life for young people, supporting the service to end the use of seclusion and promoting a reduction in the use of medication and physical restraint. As Andrea's nominator says: "She is an inspirational leader for staff in the unit and role-models person-centred values in every aspect of her practice".

LEARNING IN PRACTICE AWARD

Sponsored by The Open University

Judges: John D'Arcy, The Open University; Joan Smith, Patient and Client Council; Edna Grant, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Tracy Gibney

Clinical educator nursing workforce
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

In 2020, the South Eastern Trust launched an international nurse recruitment programme to help address staffing vacancies. Tracy took a leading role in the development and implementation of this programme, comprising 10 days online training and five further skills practice days. Tracy did not let the pandemic and associated quarantine restrictions deter her, proactively using the quarantine period to guide nurses remotely through the theory elements of the Nursing and Midwifery Council [NMC] exam. She developed learning materials, clinical skills demonstration videos, written assignments and educational quizzes, allowing the nurses to study at their own pace and with ownership of their learning experience. Assignments were completed and submitted online with real time feedback and communication provided by Tracy. She worked tirelessly to support the participants, maintaining the human element and building strong relationships through individualised learning plans and tailored educational activities. She utilised other tools such as game-based learning as a means of ensuring that the nurses remained engaged and motivated. Since Tracy introduced this programme, 302 nurses have now passed the NMC Objective Structured Clinical Examination [OSCE] exam with a 100% pass rate and have proceeded to join the trust staff. The feedback has been exemplary, with one nurse saying: "This is an excellent training programme. The clinical educators are supportive, just lovely. The training is very thorough as it covers all the areas you need to pass the OSCE exam. I'm just pleased with the educational support and motivation to study."



Anne Gordon

Clinical educator (mental health)
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Anne was appointed to a new post as a mental health nurse educator in 2021. Mindful that many nursing students feel anxious and fearful of what to expect when beginning a placement in a mental health setting, her key motivation is to ensure that every student nurse has a positive experience during their clinical placement. She reinforces the message that mental ill health is not confined to mental health services, as well as demonstrating the unique contribution made by mental health nurses. Anne collates feedback and continuous learning to inform and develop the student experience and resources. The person-centred induction and schedule she devised has been commended and shared with other directorates within the trust and she has also developed a student charter. Anne delivers weekly clinical training sessions based on student feedback and also leads the support of newly-qualified nurses, ensuring a robust and supportive preceptorship period and promoting a culture that values and recognises all staff. She has also introduced a new monthly opportunity to highlight areas of achievements, concerns, reflection, and opportunities to connect with colleagues that focuses on improving patient outcomes by learning from one another. Anne states: "Mental health nurses can be negative regarding our profession but now is the time to emerge from the shadows of the health service and make our voices heard. We have stresses and challenges every day but this is an amazing profession to work within. I am a proud mental health nurse and will do everything within my new role to support our staff and students."

LEARNING IN PRACTICE AWARD

Sponsored by The Open University

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR
AWARDS PROGRAMME



Maeve Murray

Paediatric practice educator
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

The recruitment and retention of nursing staff presents a huge challenge in the current climate. Within children's nursing, there is a smaller pool of staff to fill vacant posts. To develop the trust's strategy for the recruitment and retention of children's nurses, Maeve developed a bespoke induction programme for newly-qualified staff. She liaised with trust leaders to secure support for the programme. Maeve then researched best practice across the UK and adapted the learning to suit the trust environment. She worked tirelessly to gather feedback and refine the programme. This was delivered in a classroom setting away from the clinical environment, with the pandemic necessitating creativity in how the programme was delivered. The learning outcomes are designed to help nurses feel supported while transitioning into their new roles. There is a focus on patient safety and the demonstration of clinical procedures to update and strengthen knowledge and skills. The programme also emphasises the importance of reflection and encourages the participants to consider a future role within the trust. Maeve's enthusiasm and passion has been evident throughout the programme and was commented on in feedback, participants saying that they felt comfortable asking questions knowing they were in a safe environment. She provided support for preceptors and the nurses throughout the programme and afterwards when staff were transitioning into their new roles. The initiative has been a huge success, with all the newly-qualified nurses remaining with the trust. As one participant stated: "My value was very much emphasised throughout the induction, which is something that has never really been acknowledged. I feel welcomed and more confident in my role."

PATIENT'S CHOICE AWARD

Sponsored by the Patient and Client Council

Judges: Johnny Turnbull, Patient and Client Council; Jeanette Bramald, Patient and Client Council; Maureen Dolan, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Pamela Scott

Cardiac and thoracic surgery nurse
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Pamela has been nominated by a patient who experienced a cardiac arrest whilst staying in a hotel with friends to celebrate her 40th birthday. Pamela was staying in the hotel and heard the patient's friend screaming. She ran to the room and began CPR, continuing for twenty minutes (with two shocks from a defibrillator) until paramedics arrived. As the patient points out, Pamela was 20 weeks pregnant at the time and the strain on her body would have been phenomenal but she continued CPR until the pulse returned. The next day, Pamela rang the hotel and was told that the patient had been admitted to the Royal Victoria Hospital in Belfast. Pamela kept in touch with the nursing staff in the intensive care unit. The initial prognosis was not good and the patient's husband and family were told to prepare for the worst, with a 6% chance of survival being mentioned. After three days in a coma, the patient responded positively and regained consciousness. The cause of the cardiac arrest is still not fully known and the patient now has a subcutaneous implantable cardioverter defibrillator fitted. The patient said: "All nurses are amazing but Pamela went above and beyond her call of duty. She put everything she had, physically and mentally, to see that I survived. Her compassion and empathy towards my friends, her strength and endurance to carry out lengthy CPR whilst pregnant, her ability to remain calm during a highly pressurised situation, are testimonies to the type of person and nurse that Pamela is. She risked her own health to save my life and for that I will be forever in her debt."



Pat Gorman

Respiratory nurse specialist
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Pat has been nominated by a number of patients with idiopathic pulmonary fibrosis [IPF], a terminal condition in which the lungs become scarred and breathing becomes increasingly difficult. All of the nominators praise Pat's caring nature, professional expertise, and willingness to go that extra mile to provide support and reassurance. She co-founded an IPF support group at Antrim Area Hospital. When the pandemic began, Pat worked tirelessly to move the meetings online. The nominators reference how Pat devoted her free time not only to attending the meetings but also to providing additional support. One patient said: "The height of the pandemic was a very scary time for all of us and it was always great to be able to see her fortnightly on Zoom. Without that, I don't know what I and the rest of us would have done." Another patient commented on how Pat even provided information on how to register with the main supermarkets to obtain priority deliveries. She has also been widely commended for her ability to communicate openly and honestly with patients. One nominator wrote: "Pat ensures that I am never without medication and the correct oxygen and actually has the ability to make me feel as though I am the only patient she has. I know she will be at the end of the phone any time, day or night." Another patient states: "She explained my disease to me and gave me hope and the tools to go away and live with my disease. I have never forgotten that day. Pat is a very special nurse with a unique empathy and caring attitude."

BROWNLEE-SILVERDALE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by Roberta Brownlee and Silverdale Care Home

Judges: Geraldine Browne, Silverdale Care Home; Heather Finlay, HSC Clinical Education Centre; Paul McAleer, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Dr Sharon McCloskey

Bereavement co-ordinator
Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Sharon responded to the challenge of the pandemic and its impact on bereaved families and staff through compassionate and visionary leadership. She established a helpline and support service providing outreach calls for bereaved families. Sharon ensured staff were equipped to deal with individual situations as they supported families and staff, often in challenging circumstances, through regular supervision and always being available to discuss concerns. Building on practices established during the pandemic, Sharon has set out the vision for a new model of bereavement services within the trust. She gathered, collated and presented evidence demonstrating that outreach calls were of benefit both to bereaved families and clinical teams. She ensured feedback was shared with teams and issues causing distress were explored and resolved. Sharon prepared and presented a business case for the new service model to senior management, which recognised this as an excellent opportunity to strengthen the service. She then secured resources to expand the team, recruiting a service improvement facilitator, bereavement liaison practitioner and administrative staff. Sharon established a bereavement oversight group and developed a work plan reflecting trust and strategic drivers as well as directorate-specific priorities. She provides support through a range of methods, including one-to-one support when circumstances are particularly difficult for staff, as well as through a range of supportive groups. She has also provided staff training in managing death and bereavement. Her nominator notes: "Sharon is an exceptional advocate for dying patients, relatives, nurses and nursing locally and across Northern Ireland."



Fiona Linehan

Clinical nurse manager, Healthcare in Prison team
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Fiona works tirelessly to improve standards of nursing care in an extremely complex setting and works collaboratively with other services to ensure improved outcomes for patients and staff. In 2019, Ash House and Hydebank Wood College were inspected by the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority and by Criminal Justice Inspection Northern Ireland. This inspection noted significant improvements in health care under Fiona's leadership, reporting that services were well led, staff morale was good, and that staff reported feeling valued and supported by senior managers. This was an outstanding achievement given the significant problems and very poor staff morale reported in 2015 by Dame Ann Owers. Under Fiona's leadership, self-harm has reduced significantly and patients are more engaged than before. The COVID infection control and vaccination programme has been recognised as one of the most successful within a prison environment anywhere in the world. Working closely with the trust infection control lead and the Prison Service, Fiona ensured a minimal impact of COVID-19 on people in prison, with low infection rates, effective management to reduce transmission, no associated hospitalisations, and no related deaths. To date, over 75% of the prison population has been vaccinated. Fiona has recently introduced student nurses to the prison setting, with feedback indicating that their placements offer excellent learning opportunities and experience of high standards of professional practice. She promotes continuing professional development for all staff and encourages interdisciplinary learning and collaboration. Her nominator explains: "Developing strategic relationships with partnership organisations is key to Fiona's success. She never avoids difficult conversations and advocates for some of the most vulnerable patients in society."

BROWNLEE-SILVERDALE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by Roberta Brownlee and Silverdale Care Home

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR
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Liz McCormick

Nurse locality manager
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

In April 2020, at the beginning of the pandemic, a number of residents in a local nursing home tested positive for COVID-19, as did nursing staff working within the home. The consequence was that many frail and vulnerable people required nursing care but there was a shortage of staff to provide it. This was compounded by high staff sickness levels. When the trust was notified, Liz engaged her team and a group of four district nurses agreed to step in, arriving at the home within the hour to provide help and support. Team colleagues covered their work, taking on additional cases and working well beyond their scheduled hours to ensure continuity of service provision. This illustrated how district nurses are adaptable and have a wide range of skills, from the provision of end of life care, wound care, catheter management and medication management to the implementation of robust infection control procedures. Working in this way provided Liz and the district nurses with the opportunity to work in partnership with fellow nurses in a different setting and show leadership, stepping up and facing the challenge presented by the pandemic. They did not question the request for help; they willingly offered assistance and demonstrated tremendous courage and leadership in their response. This, in turn, helped encourage local and regional nursing colleagues to volunteer to support nursing homes in crisis during the pandemic. As Liz's nominator explains: "This pandemic afforded district nursing the opportunity to bridge the gap and be counted. As a group, they will know that they did their very best."

INDEPENDENT SECTOR NURSING AWARD

Sponsored by Balmoral Healthcare

Judges: Angela McLernon, Eastern Federation Support Unit; Kieran McCormick, Balmoral Healthcare; Conor McDowell, RCN Northern Ireland Board



Sharon Smyth

Care home manager
Hutchinson Care Homes

Sharon was appointed manager of Antrim Care Home when Hutchinson Care Homes took over the home seven years ago. Her nomination focuses on her success in developing and managing an intermediate care unit in the home. The Northern Health and Social Care Trust contracted 11 beds to the home from April 2016 owing to high demand at Antrim Area Hospital. Sharon set about building a team to meet this challenge. She led the development of policies and processes as the new service was established. Sharon has worked tirelessly to build relationships with stakeholders and in the local community to ensure a seamless service for residents. One of her key challenges was to develop the knowledge and skills of the nursing team in a short period of time, as well as building confidence in dealing with residents and families to discuss care options. Sharon has also facilitated improvements in various clinical skills that would not normally be managed in a care home setting. The intermediate care service was particularly important during the pandemic and has been held up as an example of excellence by the trust. The service has since been extended to 18 beds. Her nominator explains: "Sharon has built a reputable 'community hospital' that we are so proud of and her commitment, hard work and determination has been exceptional. She prides herself that her focus has always been on lobbying and negotiating for the best outcomes for residents, advocating on their behalf and that of their families."



Ciaran McGowan

Deputy nurse manager
Parkmanor Oaks Care Home

Ciaran has worked at Parkmanor Oaks for 11 years, starting as a care assistant and quickly progressing to senior care assistant and then care assistant supervisor. His skills and qualities were evident to all who worked with him and, five years ago when the opportunity became available, Ciaran began pre-registration nurse training with The Open University. In the final year of his degree, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Ciaran was due to go out on his management placement but did not want to leave the residents and team at that difficult time. He negotiated with The Open University to undertake the placement within Parkmanor Oaks and his subsequent contribution was described by his mentor as being invaluable. After graduating and registering, Ciaran was appointed deputy nurse manager. His nominator describes how Ciaran put his own life to one side in order to ensure that residents and staff were fully supported during the pandemic, working well beyond his contracted hours and coming in on his days off if required. The nomination also recognises Ciaran's capacity to inspire and motivate his team, with a strong belief in the value of training and development to enable staff to reach their potential and achieve their goals. The nominator references Ciaran's attention to detail and compassion whenever a resident dies, ensuring that their deaths are peaceful and that the human dignity of the resident is maintained and respected at all times. As his nominator concludes: "Ciaran is an exceptional nurse and an exceptional manager".

INDEPENDENT SECTOR NURSING AWARD

Sponsored by Balmoral Healthcare

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Royal College
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Northern Ireland



Cherith Rogers

Regional area manager
Healthcare Ireland

Cherith has spent her whole career working in care homes, starting as a care assistant when a student nurse, then as a preceptorship nurse, staff nurse, unit manager, deputy manager, home manager and now regional area manager. Her nomination focuses upon her commitment to ensuring that people living in care homes have access to continuing safe, high quality and person-centred clinical care. Cherith has completed a part-time secondment to the Department of Health as a professional nursing advisor on care homes, thereby influencing policy development whilst building a strong professional care home network. She has also worked on the Department's Enhancing Clinical Care Framework for care homes. During the COVID-19 pandemic, Cherith supported the Department's Rapid Learning Initiative in care homes. She received the title of Queen's Nurse in 2021, currently the only care home nurse in Northern Ireland to receive this prestigious title. In this capacity, Cherith is committed to delivering the best possible nursing care for people within the community, working with nurses and decision-makers to ensure that high quality care is available to everyone, where and when they need it.

RCN NORTHERN IRELAND NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Judges: Maria McIlgorm, Chief Nursing Officer, Department of Health; Linda Kelly, Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery (NIPEC); Robert Sowney, RCN Fellow; Fiona Devlin, RCN Northern Ireland Board Chair



Laura Croan

Trainee advanced nurse practitioner
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Laura's nomination demonstrates how investment in specialist nurses generates improved patient outcomes and eases pressures elsewhere in the system. Within the regional cancer centre at Belfast City Hospital, lymphoma patients were previously assessed and treated by haematology consultants. The consultant team had a large caseload, with lengthy follow-up times. In 2014, the Friends of the Cancer Centre charity funded Northern Ireland's first specific lymphoma clinical nurse specialist. Under Laura's leadership, a weekly nurse-led follow-up clinic was established to improve outcomes, reduce waiting times, and promote consistency of care. The clinic utilises longer appointments to allow time to identify disease progression and incorporate holistic assessment. The model can facilitate 10-15 patients per clinic, reducing the consultants' waiting list by 400 patients each year. Laura developed a service protocol and submitted a business case to secure resources and funding. The role continued to develop and the clinic is now managed by a team of specialist nurses. Feedback indicates how 100% of patients were satisfied with their care, 100% had confidence in the clinical nurse specialist assessing them, and 98% felt they had enough time to discuss concerns. One patient wrote: "My care has been open, honest and transparent. I have been quite overwhelmed by the real care and compassion I have received from my clinical nurse specialist." The family of Laura's nominator, Brian, said: "It meant so much to see someone understanding what I'm going through. Her reassuring and caring face was such a light at a time that was such a dark place for me. Laura deserves all the accolades that can be bestowed upon her."



Gary Rutherford

Founder and project development manager
ARC Fitness Ltd

Whilst working in acute psychiatric admission wards and as an addiction nurse therapist within the Western Health and Social Care Trust, Gary observed a gap in support services within the community. He set up the addiction recovery service (ARC Fitness), initially as an online sign-posting service. From the outset, demand was high. Gary further developed the service to provide education and support, consulting with service users using evidence-based practice to develop individual and family support programmes as well as community education and health promotion programmes. Because of high demand, Gary made the tough decision to give up his post within the addiction service to focus on this work. ARC is now a highly reputable community-based not-for-profit organisation employing two full-time staff with a support team of 14 including mental health nurses, therapists, counsellors, personal trainers, and peer recovery coaches. Gary provides holistic person-centred care and ensures the service focuses on preventing further physical and emotional harm to individuals, families, and the wider community. Gary's nominator explains how he has developed a 'no shame' approach to addressing the stigma related to addiction and supporting individuals "often living chaotic lives on the periphery of society". Gary has helped a wide range of individuals and families struggling with substance abuse, run awareness campaigns, and held events to help change the conversation around addiction. He continues to train peer supporters and advocates. ARC's patient-reported outcome measures show reductions in symptoms of depression and anxiety, as well as evidence of positive social contacts between participants. Gary's nominator concludes: "He ensures this client group has a voice to shape services and uses his leadership skills to change and positively influence care delivery to this group".

RCN NORTHERN IRELAND NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

2022 NURSE OF THE YEAR
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Emma Mackle

Practice development nurse facilitator
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Emma's nomination highlights the outstanding support provided to care homes by trust nursing staff during the COVID-19 pandemic. With a professional background in acute medicine and the care of older people, Emma joined the trust's Responsive Education and Anticipatory Care to Care Homes [REACH] team four years ago. The pandemic highlighted the vulnerability of care home residents because of their high levels of frailty and clinical acuity. Emma has been integral to the development, implementation and evaluation of a nurse-led multidisciplinary team providing an enhanced care response to care home residents. The pilot began in January 2021 across three homes, being rolled out to a further six from April 2021. Emma's team supports residents in acute decline or at the end of life, thereby avoiding unnecessary potentially avoidable emergency department attendances and enabling residents to remain in their home when it is safe and appropriate. Emma engaged with GPs, care home managers, community and acute colleagues, and the Northern Ireland Hospice to access specialist palliative care nurses and other staff. Data comparing 2021 with 2020 for the initial three pilot homes shows that 73 (27%) fewer residents attended emergency departments and there were 53 (39.5%) fewer hospital admissions. Emma is working with the Public Health Agency to introduce care opinion in one care home initially, seeking residents' views of their experience. Her nominator says: "Emma's resilience and tenacity is motivated by a desire always to advocate for residents and what matters to them. She understands the importance of data, supporting the team to engage with it and use the information to provide assurance, support and demonstrate outcomes."



Lesley McKillen

Home manager
MD Healthcare

Lesley has developed a centre of excellence for residents with complex tracheostomy and associated communication and clinical care needs in a supportive care home environment. She offers a service that is rarely provided in a care home because of the specialist clinical skills required for patients who would otherwise need hospital care. Lesley identified that some higher acuity hospital patients were not readily able to access community care in order to meet their clinical needs after discharge. She set about designing and developing a bespoke service to address this. A lengthy planning process ensued, involving key stakeholders within the care home team and from trust hospital and community teams to facilitate the transition of care from hospital to the care home setting. Lesley recruited a team to support one-to-one care, which was very challenging. She also designed, organised and delivered training to meet safety and clinical care standards. Lesley felt it important to establish a relationship between patients and the care home team, building trust, respect and confidence, allaying fears and apprehension about the transition. The success of the initiative has enabled Lesley to offer specialist respiratory care to three more individuals at Rathmena House Care Home. Lesley and her team are extremely proud of what they have achieved, especially with the added pressures brought by COVID-19. Her nominator says: "Positive feedback from residents, relatives, care managers and other trust personnel has drawn interest from others seeking to understand how well this model of care works for patients with specific respiratory and communication requirements. However, Lesley is most proud that she has enabled a father to reconnect with his family in a community setting."

OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Sponsored by the Northern Ireland Practice and Education Council for Nursing and Midwifery [NIPEC]



The Outstanding Achievement Award is aimed at recognising exceptional service to the nursing and midwifery professions in Northern Ireland. The award is sponsored by NIPEC and the previous winners are:

- 2002 Dr Mona Grey OBE
- 2003 Miss Kathleen Robb OBE
- 2004 Dame Mary Uprichard
- 2005 John Walsh
- 2006 Professor Mary Hanratty CBE
- 2007 Kate O'Hanlon MBE
- 2008 Judith Hill CBE
- 2009 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Volunteers)
- 2010 Carmel Hanna
- 2011 Susan Semple
- 2012 Elizabeth Henderson OBE FRCN
- 2013 Professor Hugh McKenna CBE FRCN
- 2014 Margaret Graham
- 2015 Roberta Brownlee MBE
- 2016 Robert Sowney FRCN
- 2017 Professor Tanya McCance
- 2018 Professor Martin Bradley OBE FRCN
- 2019 Professor Kader Parahoo





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