

# 2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS

AWARDS PROGRAMME  
8 JUNE 2017  
Culloden Hotel, Holywood



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 2017 Nurse of the Year Awards ceremony. It is good to be back here once more at The Culloden Hotel.

As ever, these awards provide the opportunity to highlight excellence within nursing in Northern Ireland and the contribution that nurses make to the health and well-being of the people of Northern Ireland.

We find ourselves, once again, working within the context of a political vacuum in Northern Ireland. The continuing absence of a Northern Ireland Executive and working Assembly is denying our health and social care service the political and strategic leadership that it urgently requires. It also means that the capacity for decision-making, whether on pay, staffing issues, or the reform and modernisation of health and social care, for example, is at best severely constrained and often entirely absent. For the sake of patients and clients, their families and carers, and our dedicated health and social care staff, we need to secure the restoration and full functioning of our devolved institutions of government as quickly as possible.

I would like to thank all of our sponsors. You are most welcome here tonight and I hope that you will find the occasion rewarding. The RCN is well aware that, without your support, this event simply would not take place. I would encourage all our guests to find out more about our sponsors through reading the entries 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 to ensure that we appropriately reflect the excellence and diversity that exist within nursing in Northern Ireland.

Congratulations to all our finalists and my best wishes for an enjoyable evening.



**Fiona Devlin**  
RCN Northern Ireland Board Chair

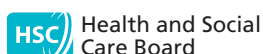


# OUR SPONSORS



## **The Open University**

The Open University is once again supporting the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Learning in Practice Award. This award is given in recognition of the excellent teaching and learning that takes place in practice, across a range of acute and community settings in Northern Ireland. Student nurses gain invaluable learning experience whilst in clinical practice. Mentors, practice supervisors, managers and practice education teams all support their learning, to enable students to achieve Nursing and Midwifery Council requirements and become the nurses of tomorrow. The Open University has been supporting health care assistants to achieve their aspirations and become registered nurses in Northern Ireland since 2004. The support of the DHSSPS, and partnership working with all five health and social care trusts and the independent sector, enables The Open University to support student nurses and increase the number of graduates. The ethos of The Open University is to widen participation in higher education and support all those with a desire and commitment to learn. This award reflects The Open University's appreciation of all the teaching carried out across the health and social care sector in Northern Ireland, supporting learning and development for all.



## **Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency**

The Health and Social Care Board is accountable to the Minister for translating a vision for health and social care into a range of services that deliver high quality and safe outcomes for users, good value for the taxpayer and compliance with statutory obligations. The Board aims to ensure that the voice of the patient and client informs commissioning decisions.



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 Agency are health improvement, health protection, reducing inequalities, improving quality, safety and experience of services, and supporting personal and public involvement. This is achieved by working directly with communities, health and social care providers and through joint commissioning with the Health and Social Care Board.



## **Inspire**

Inspire is the new name for Niamh (the Northern Ireland Association for Mental Health). Inspire's vision of well-being for all is at the core of its service delivery across the group. With a focus on wellness, not illness, Inspire provides a wide range of high quality and innovative services, focusing on mental health, learning disabilities and addiction. Inspire provides community-based mental health services including housing, day support and advocacy. Its recovery-focused services impact upon the lives of over 1,500 people each week and, through its advocacy role, Inspire Mental Health provides representation to support the best interests of its service users. Inspire Workplaces is a unique social enterprise delivering counselling and psychological therapies in the workplace and in third level education across the island of Ireland. Over one and a half million people can currently access these services. Inspire Learning Disability provides a range of housing and day support services across the island of Ireland. In the last year, Addiction NI has joined the Inspire group, extending the depth and breadth of services offered. In addition, Inspire is committed to working in wider society to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues, build resilience in individuals and communities, and inform and influence policy and practice. To do this, Inspire is working in partnership with the Public Health Agency and Comic Relief to deliver Northern Ireland's first regional mental health anti-stigma and anti-discrimination campaign, Change Your Mind. Inspire is delighted and proud to be able to support the 2017 RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Inspiring Excellence Award.



### **Cancer Focus Northern Ireland and Macmillan Cancer Support**

Cancer Focus Northern Ireland is a local cancer charity working since 1969 to reduce the impact of cancer on people's lives. It provides care and support services for cancer patients and their families, offers a range of cancer prevention programmes to help people lessen their risk of getting cancer, funds scientific research into the causes and treatment of the disease, and campaigns for better health policy to protect our community and its future.

Macmillan Cancer Support in Northern Ireland provides practical and emotional support to people living with cancer, and their family and friends. Cancer nurses are at the heart of the charity's work. Right from the moment an individual is diagnosed and throughout their cancer journey, they should have access to the highest quality care and the support, energy and inspiration they need. That is why Macmillan Cancer Support continues to invest in our local nursing workforce. Cancer Focus and Macmillan Cancer Support are delighted to be able to celebrate the achievements of the Northern Ireland cancer nursing workforce by sponsoring the 2017 RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Cancer Nurse Award.



### **Priory Adult Care**

The Priory Group of Companies is the leading provider of behavioural care in the UK. Its purpose is to make a real and lasting difference for everyone it supports. To achieve this, it is organised into three divisions; Healthcare and Partnerships in Care, Education and Children's Services, and Adult Care, which together support the needs of more than 30,000 people each year. The Group currently treats more than 70 different conditions through a nationwide network of over 400 facilities that support service users' health, care, education and specialised needs. It provides complex care and neuro-rehabilitation facilities, mental health care hospitals and clinics, medium and low secure facilities, specialist schools and colleges, supported residential facilities and homes, and care homes for older people. As part of the Priory Group of Companies, Adult Care is the leading provider of specialist adult care in the country. This new division was formally launched recently by combining the Amore Care and Craegmoor divisions. In bringing these services together, Priory Adult Care can pool the combined resources of both divisions and better meet the needs of service users and their families, as well as commissioners.



### **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. For her outstanding leadership ability spanning some forty years, Roberta was awarded the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Lifetime Achievement Award in 2015. 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 reducing 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 continuous staff training and development.

# OUR SPONSORS



## **Defence Medical Services**

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. Personnel from all three services, regulars and reserves, work alongside civil servants and other supporting units providing health care to service personnel in the UK, abroad, those at sea, and, in some circumstances, family dependents of service personnel and entitled civilians. It also provides some aspects of health care to other countries' personnel overseas, in both permanent military bases and disaster relief areas. 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 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve), 253 (North Irish) Medical Regiment (Army Reserve), HMS Hibernia (Royal Naval Reserve) and 502 (Ulster) Squadron (Royal Auxiliary Airforce).



## **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 collaborations and strategic alliances with a wide range of stakeholders, partners, agencies and sectors in order to meet its aims.



## **Liverpool Victoria**

LV=, the UK's largest friendly society with over five million members and customers, is proud to support the work of RCN Northern Ireland and delighted to sponsor the 2017 RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Team Manager Award. RCN members have been enjoying exclusive discounts on LV= car and home insurance for many years. The RCN-approved car and home insurance are both Defaqto five star rated and recommended by Which? too.



## **Ulster University**

Ulster University's School of Nursing has been leading graduate nurse education for over 40 years and has a strong culture of scholarship and high quality teaching. In 2017, it was placed 37th in the QS World Rankings for nursing and 5th in the UK. 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, 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 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**  
Your voice in health and social care

**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 delivers a range of full-time and part-time undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in the disciplines of nursing and midwifery. The School prides itself on offering programmes that integrate theory and clinical practice, preparing students to be sought-after practitioners, capable of delivering high quality care around the globe in the most challenging of circumstances. Programme partners include internationally-recognised clinical institutions, and ambulatory and community care services. The School is proud to celebrate the achievements of the best and brightest students again, through sponsorship of the RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year Student Award.



**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 five HSC trusts. The Centre 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 which are informed by the best available evidence, maximise the use of modern educational approaches and are delivered by highly-skilled professionally-registered teaching staff.



**BLM**

BLM's dedicated health care team comprises over 55 lawyers offering specialist expertise, with experience as legal advisers to HSC trusts, professional bodies and independent health care organisations. BLM handles dispute resolution, professional discipline, regulatory, public law, clinical negligence and health care advisory work. In addition to the core areas of health care expertise, BLM has dedicated teams which act for health care professionals faced with legal issues pertaining to information law, defamation, product liability, human rights, mental capacity, judicial review, fraud, crime, and medical research and ethics.



**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**



The five health and social care trusts provide integrated health and social care services across Northern Ireland. Health and social care trusts manage and administer hospitals, health centres, residential homes, day centres and other health and social care facilities. They provide a wide range of health and social care services to the communities they serve. The Executive Director of Nursing of each trust is responsible and accountable for the delivery of nursing care and the RCN is grateful to them for their support.



# STUDENT AWARD

Sponsored by the Queen's University of Belfast

Judges - Robert Sowney, RCN Foundation; Roisin Devlin, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Kathy Fodey, Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority



## **Ruth Haire**

The Queen's University of Belfast

Ruth is a third year pre-registration student at the Queen's University of Belfast and is undertaking the children's nursing programme. She has been nominated by her personal tutor and clinical mentor on the basis not only of her academic excellence but also the positive feedback she has received from parents, children and mentors during her practice placements, as well as her extensive voluntary work both in Northern Ireland and internationally. Ruth has a wide range of pre-registration clinical experience in medical and surgical wards, neonatal and paediatric intensive care, haematology and community settings. The parent of one child cared for by Ruth during a placement wrote: "Ruth is an excellent student nurse. She has provided fantastic care not only to my son but also to me." A professional colleague submitted that Ruth is "an outstanding student who showed professionalism and compassion". Ruth has also demonstrated a commitment to enhancing the care of young people, many of whom have addiction and mental health issues, through voluntary work in a drop-in centre, as well as organising a young girls' group to discuss sex education, nutrition, and general health and well-being. She has assisted in raising financial support for the provision of formula milk for infants in Zambia and visited Cambodia last year to promote and provide family-centred care for children. Ruth has also visited children's homes in Kenya and Ethiopia. Her nominator concludes: "Ruth has excelled throughout her nurse training and achieved highly, both academically and clinically. She is a great role model for all nursing students." The judging panel observed how nursing is a calling for Ruth, not just a career. It also noted how she displays an international perspective and goes the extra mile to make a difference.



## **Chris Maguire**

The Queen's University of Belfast

Chris is a third year adult branch pre-registration nursing student at the Queen's University of Belfast. His nomination focuses not only upon his excellent academic and nursing record but also his significant extra-curricular achievements. Chris's nominator notes his level of knowledge, dedication to delivering a high standard of patient care, and his ability to become an integral part of the nursing and wider health care team. Chris also serves as an emergency transport attendant with St John Ambulance and is Vice President of the university's Pre-Hospital Care Society, which organises training and practical demonstrations for students. Chris has been instrumental in persuading many nurses to join the society in order to enhance their skills, as well as promoting integrated learning alongside student doctors, pharmacists and allied health professionals. Chris jointly help organise #QUB Crash, a project to raise awareness of road safety that attracted a high degree of participation and significant media coverage. He also organised a maternity theme night to promote awareness of childbirth for students who would otherwise not be exposed to it during their training. Chris undertook an international placement in Nepal, fundraising £3,000 which he then donated to the local hospital and the host community. His nominator describes Chris as "an excellent all-round student nurse". Chris impressed the judging panel with his commitment to a multi-professional partnership approach at a student level.



# NURSING RESEARCH AWARD

Sponsored by Ulster University

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Judges - Angela Reed, NIPEC; Molly Kane, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Gillian McCorkell, RCN NIRAO



## Neal Cook

Ulster University

Neal's nomination focuses upon his leadership of research designed to enhance the practice learning element of a pre-registration nursing curriculum in order to develop the caring attributes of students in line with the principles of person-centred practice. Working collectively with academics, practice partners and students, the research focused upon enhancing the practice learning portfolio and increasing support for its use. The benefits of the portfolio are the ways in which it can signpost students to relevant learning, support the identification of learning needs, enable access to learning opportunities, engage students in critical reflection, and improve the nature and consistency of support during practice placements. Perhaps most importantly, Neal's research demonstrated how the caring attributes of students can be sustained and developed through this transformative approach. A framework for practice learning was developed through the research to enable the development of person-centred practitioners in pre-registration nursing programmes. The findings have been widely disseminated through academic writing and presentations at professional conferences, with a further six research publications planned. Neal plans to develop his research through investigating how the caring attributes developed during practice placements are retained beyond the point of registration. Neal impressed the judging panel with the passion that he displays, together with his leadership and expert knowledge of the subject area.



## Gary Mitchell

Four Seasons Health Care

Gary's research focuses upon the development of a safe staffing model for independent sector care homes, believed to be the first of its kind in the world. In order to inform the development of the model, Gary and colleagues spent over 200 hours making 1890 separate clinical observations in 11 care homes across Northern Ireland. Based upon the data recorded, Gary then designed a model that was subsequently piloted across 15 care homes. This has revealed that staffing levels fluctuate according to the complexity of patients' conditions, rather than on the basis of the number of patients. It has also demonstrated that many homes were not staffed appropriately in relation to the number and skill mix of the workforce. The model designed by Gary is being used by Four Seasons Health Care in areas of England and has now also been implemented in Northern Ireland. It has helped to secure additional funding to meet the needs of care home residents with a learning disability. Gary's research has demonstrated that existing safe staffing models often do not adequately reflect the complex needs of many people living in care homes. It has also highlighted the importance of the care assistant role in meeting the psychological, social and spiritual needs of residents, as well as the significance of the named nurse. The model is now being modified through further research in order to apply to mental health and intermediate care settings and Gary's research has been published in professional journals. The judging panel commented on how the quality and experience of residents has been enhanced as a result of Gary's work. His rigorous approach to a complex subject area was evident, as was his enthusiasm and knowledge.

# TEAM MANAGER AWARD

Sponsored by Liverpool Victoria

Judges - Heather Finlay, Department of Health; Eileen Dunlop, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Lynne Charlton, Public Health Agency



## **Orla Mathews**

Ward sister, Antrim Area Hospital  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Orla is the sister in a ward for older people and has been nominated for working tirelessly to raise standards of care for patients and develop staff professionally in order to meet complex and changing patient needs. Her nominator describes how the ward has a strong culture and sense of identity, infused with a practice development ethos, positive role modelling and a passion for older people and patients living with dementia. Orla is an accredited dementia champion and also joint leader of a Foundation of Nursing Studies project aimed at enhancing the experience of patients living with dementia in an acute hospital environment. She has delivered dementia awareness training to ward staff, including chaplaincy and domestic staff colleagues, embracing and reflecting an all-encompassing person-centred dementia-friendly ward culture. The Northern Trust was the first in Northern Ireland to pilot the innovative dementia companion role, funded by the Health and Social Care Board and Public Health Agency. Orla was one of the first ward sisters to facilitate and pilot the role, working collaboratively with the person-centred practice and nursing innovation team. The dementia companions provide compassionate reassurance and support to patients, walking with them and listening to their stories, maintaining their identity and helping to meet their fluid and nutritional needs. Evaluation of this innovation reveals a reduced incidence of falls and episodes of distressed behaviour, as well as an improved experience for patients, their families and ward staff. Orla's nominator concludes: "Orla models the high professional standards she expects from her team in all aspects of care delivery. She is an advocate for maintaining personhood, empowering patients and their families. She and her team join the patient's acute journey alongside them through to hospital discharge." The judging panel noted how Orla brings out the best in her staff, giving them a shared sense of worth and purpose. It was also impressed with Orla's ability to adapt to staff needs, her flexibility and commitment to the development of staff.



## **Caroline Malone**

Ward sister, Musgrave Park Hospital  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Caroline is the ward sister in the Regional Acquired Brain Injury Unit at Musgrave Park Hospital and is described by her nominator as "truly inspirational and motivated", ensuring that "the patient always comes first" and that the ward team "collaboratively provides a gold standard service of patient-centred, family-focused, quality and knowledge-driven care". Caroline successfully introduced a system to identify the harm deriving from medication errors and, more importantly, to reduce their occurrence, sharing the findings with the wider multidisciplinary team. She has improved patient safety through the introduction of nominated ward champions for infection control, documentation, medicines management and nutrition, ensuring that all staff can access the information they need in support of these priorities through the development of a resource room. Caroline is passionate about the protected mealtime system, conducting an audit and using the outcomes to refine the system in order to ensure that patients are not disturbed unnecessarily at mealtimes. She works proactively with service users to improve the patient experience and has facilitated the introduction to the ward of six volunteers, who provide a range of services of benefit to patients and their families, including reflexology, hand massage and simply spending time talking to and reading with patients. Caroline's nominator concludes: "Her staff always acknowledge that she has their interests at heart, whether through encouragement to increase their professional knowledge base or regarding what is happening to them on a daily basis in their personal lives". The judging panel commended Caroline for unlocking staff potential and valuing her colleagues. It noted how she places due emphasis upon the importance of families knowing that their relative is in safe hands and has developed this culture of patient safety through working with staff.

# CHIEF NURSING OFFICER'S AWARD

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



in association with the Royal College of Nursing

Judges - Charlotte McArdle, Chief Nursing Officer; Anne Marie Marley, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Lynn Fee, Southern Health and Social Care Trust



## **Yvonne Diamond and Sheree Quinn**

Service manager and House manager, Dunluce House  
Priory Adult Care

Yvonne and Sheree have been jointly nominated for their achievement in developing a new care pathway for patients with complex mental health issues as a consequence of acquired brain injury. Many of these patients had been in hospital settings for up to seven years because of the previous lack of suitable community-based accommodation. Yvonne and Sheree assessed the care environment and the needs of patients before identifying the appropriate staffing skill set and developing a comprehensive training needs analysis to address this. They then managed the transition of patients from the hospital setting to Dunluce Bungalow, within the Bohill Bungalows facility in Coleraine. This involved setting commissioning outcome goals, leading on staff recruitment and, through their practice leadership skills, leading and developing the nursing team in successfully managing the transition. As a consequence, the quality of life for patients and their families has demonstrably improved, there has been a significant reduction in adverse incidents and hospital admissions, improvements in patients' diet and nutrition have been recorded, and there has been a reduction in the use of sedative medication. The nomination for Yvonne and Sheree commends their dedication, nursing expertise and focus on the interests of patients and their families. A colleague states: "I am very proud to be part of the team within the Bohill Bungalows and this is certainly a reflection of the excellent management from Yvonne and Sheree". The nomination concludes: "I recommend the service provided as a best practice model when considering how to plan and deliver the transition from long-stay acute/psychiatric settings to the community and that the outcome for each resident has been of significant benefit".



## **Gerry Bradley**

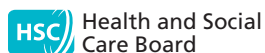
Planning and performance: project co-ordinator  
Unscheduled and Acute Care Directorate, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Gerry's nomination focuses upon his leadership role in establishing a nurse-led Alcohol Recovery Centre [ARC] in Belfast city centre. Excessive alcohol consumption can account for a significant number of weekend attendances at hospital emergency departments. Many of these individuals, because of their state of intoxication, exhibit challenging behaviours which can be disruptive to other patients and staff. During 2014, for example, 59 reported physical assaults on emergency department staff within Belfast were related to alcohol or drugs. Gerry has facilitated a redesign of the delivery of emergency care to severely intoxicated patients on Friday and Saturday night in Belfast city centre through the establishment of the ARC. This service provides an alternative environment to treat people requiring support to recover from heavy alcohol consumption and who may also have incurred minor injuries. Gerry works in partnership with Belfast Trust colleagues, police and ambulance services, Belfast City Council and various voluntary agencies to deliver the ARC service. Between December 2016 and January 2017, the service successfully treated 375 patients who would otherwise have needed to attend an emergency department. The average ARC patient journey time is 90 minutes, compared with four and a half hours in an emergency department. The ARC has helped to reduce ambulance turnaround times and the unnecessary diversion of police resources due to alcohol-related incidents. Interim evaluation by the Drug and Alcohol Network at Queen's University highlights how the model provides a safe and caring approach, as well as improving the experience of patients and staff in emergency departments. His nominator states: "Gerry has demonstrated a high level of leadership skills in developing partnership working between multiple agencies in caring for the intoxicated patient. He has integrated the principles of quality, safety and experience throughout this project, keeping patients at the heart of the service."

# HEALTH CARE SUPPORT WORKER AWARD

Sponsored by the Health and Social Care Board and the Public Health Agency

Judges - Elish McDougall, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust; David Ferran, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Helen McNeilly, RCN Northern Ireland Board



## **Ann Gregg**

Health care support worker, Antrim Area Hospital  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Between 25% and 40% of patients in acute care settings live with dementia but hospital wards are often not conducive to meeting their needs. In recognition of this, the Northern Health and Social Care Trust introduced the dementia companion role, the first of its kind in Northern Ireland. Its focus is to work collaboratively with the nursing team in order to provide compassion, reassurance and support for patients with dementia. In preparation for the role, Ann undertook a robust, specifically-tailored trust induction and training programme, designed and delivered by the person-centred practice nursing innovation team, trust education provider and trust specialist staff. As a dementia companion, Ann gets to know the patients and their families so she can interact supportively and therapeutically with them, accompanying patients to ensure that they are safe from falling and encouraging them to eat and drink under the supervision of registered nurses in order to enhance their nutrition and aid their recovery. The ward has seen a reduction in incidences of falls and distressed behaviour since the role was established. Facilitated reflective learning sessions and the use of a reflective journal have given Ann the opportunity to inform her practice. She regularly covers for dementia companion colleagues in other wards and adjusts her own working hours in accordance with the needs of patients and their families. Ann's nominator says: "It is inspiring to observe such dedication and to witness the interaction between a truly compassionate carer and another human being whilst maintaining their dignity and treating them with the utmost respect". The judging panel reflected upon how Ann is an advocate who is not afraid to speak out on behalf of patients. She is respected by all of her colleagues and impressed the judges with her dedication to put the needs of people with dementia first. Her role has had a huge impact upon patient care.



## **Ciarán McGowan**

Care assistant supervisor  
Park Manor Nursing Home, Belfast

Ciarán is employed by Macklin Care Homes as a care assistant supervisor at Park Manor Nursing Home, which provides care for older people and specialist dementia care. Ciarán's nomination focuses upon what his nominator describes as "his excellent standards of patient care, his dedication to his job and the continuation of his personal development". Ciarán played a key role in the establishment and implementation of a new care assistant induction programme, devising training plans to ensure the highest standards of care in areas such as infection prevention and control, privacy and dignity, confidentiality, fluids and nutrition, safeguarding, end of life care, communication, personal care, record keeping and personal development. The programme ensures that staff are trained to provide person-centred and holistic care that promotes the independence and dignity of patients. This is reinforced by Ciarán's role in developing new policies to improve patient care, such as in relation to infection control and the use of coloured plates and glasses to enhance the nutrition and hydration of people with dementia. Ciarán's nominator describes how he is able to build and develop relationships with the families of patients through his outstanding communication and interpersonal skills. As well as promoting and facilitating the development of colleagues through training, clinical supervision and support, Ciarán is also committed to his own development and is currently in the final year of a K117 access to nursing programme. His nominator concludes: "Ciarán is a fantastic asset to the home, his colleagues, residents and relatives. His dedication to achieving excellence shines through." Ciarán impressed the judges with his infectious enthusiasm and commitment to the development of himself and others.



# LEARNING DISABILITY AWARD

Sponsored by Priory Adult Care

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR  
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Judges - Frances Cannon, NIPEC; Rosemary Dilworth, Priory Adult Care; Wendy McGregor, RCN Northern Ireland Learning Disability Network



## **Sarah McCann**

Epilepsy nurse specialist  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Sarah is the only epilepsy nurse specialist for learning disability within the Northern Trust and her nomination focuses upon her significant contribution to improving services. She established specialist epilepsy nurse-led clinics, liaising with other health professionals to build the case for establishing the clinics and identifying an adult centre as the venue, an environment familiar to service users and where they can attend with their families and carers. This places people with a learning disability at the heart of the service and minimises disruption to their daily routines. Outcomes from the clinics are shared with GPs and other relevant health professionals to ensure that any issues identified are immediately addressed. Sarah has also successfully developed an innovative epilepsy link nurse service within the trust, whereby staff are trained to identify and manage any concerns or risks to service users. As a consequence of Sarah's achievements, people are now able to have their epilepsy reviewed regularly and the accuracy of diagnosis has improved significantly. She has also achieved a lower degree of dependence upon the use of medication to manage epilepsy and put in place individual care plans, including a system of onward referral for people with complex epilepsy. The engagement of families and carers, together with collaboration between different health professionals, has markedly improved. Sarah's nominator states: "In her practice, Sarah consistently promotes person-centred care, ensuring the service user is at the forefront of service delivery. She consistently provides reassurance, support and resolution in a timely, professional and caring manner." Sarah impressed the judging panel with her life-changing and nurse-led innovation in practice and the impact this has had on patient care.



## **Hazel McMullan**

House manager, Bohill Bungalows  
Priory Adult Care

Hazel is house manager at Rathlin House, part of the Bohill Bungalows facility in Coleraine. The service users were relocated to Rathlin House, mainly from a long-stay hospital environment. Under Hazel's management, incidences of challenging behaviour have declined from a daily basis to now being extremely rare. She conducted a review of the use of antipsychotic drugs and has played a major role in reducing dependency. Through information sessions and excellent communication skills, Hazel has led staff towards a greater understanding of the condition of service users, reducing the number of unnecessary hospital admissions and inspiring staff to provide a high standard of care and support. Hazel's nominator and testimony from the friend of a service user both praise the ways in which she respected the wishes of a service user requiring end of life care, ensuring that she was able to spend her final days in her bungalow as she wished and liaising with hospital and Marie Curie staff to provide appropriate support and staff training. One professional colleague praises the ways in which Hazel "has gone over and above expectations of her nursing role and is an outstanding role model for her team", whilst another notes how the team members managed by Hazel "have the same caring, dedicated nature", delivering "a high level of care and support" and going beyond simply meeting health needs to ensuring that service users are happy, fulfilled and able to access life-enhancing experiences. The judging panel considered how Hazel is the epitome of compassion, empathy and person-centred care. She shows passion for the service and treats patients in the way that she would wish to be treated herself.

# INSPIRING EXCELLENCE IN MENTAL HEALTH AND LEARNING DISABILITY AWARD

Sponsored by Inspire

Judges - Rodney Morton, Health and Social Care Board; Anne Campbell, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Briege Quinn, RCN Northern Ireland Board



## **Claire Maguire**

Complex behaviour nurse  
Western Health and Social Care Trust

Claire practises across the southern sector of the Western Trust, covering Fermanagh and the Omagh area. Her role embodies the principles behind the ministerial vision document *Health and well-being 2026: delivering together* in liaising with nursing homes to provide a carer-centred and patient-focused service that aims to prevent unnecessary hospital admission for patients in crisis. As well as the resultant financial savings, maintaining patients where possible in their current care setting reduces stress for patients and carers alike, promotes recovery and prevents further deterioration. Claire works collaboratively with families, carers and staff to provide observations, support, advice and education, including medication management, risk assessment and joint interventions with medical consultant and GP colleagues. Her vision is to move away from an exclusively medical care model towards securing greater input from carers and service providers, working closely with GPs, community health and social care services, and in-patient mental health and secondary care services. Claire also facilitates early discharge, supported by the close monitoring of patients. Recent audit of the service confirms a significant reduction in distress amongst carers and Claire's success in reducing unnecessary hospital admissions, with 60 out of 123 referrals received during 2016 not requiring hospital admission and just ten hospital admissions being facilitated by Claire. The service has also achieved a 34% reduction in the use of psychoactive medication. Claire's nominator describes her as "a competent and passionate mental health practitioner" who "diligently provides a service that is in the best interests of the patient". The judging panel recognised how Claire is dedicated to supporting and managing people in crisis. She was commended for preventing unnecessary hospital admission and decreasing family and carer stress.



## **Paul McAleer**

Forensic practitioner  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Paul's nomination focuses upon his role in delivering the Second Chance for Change psychodrama project to service users with a learning disability. Now in its second year, this project offers dynamic group therapy and is delivered in collaboration with the Educational Shakespeare Company. It provides service users with an opportunity to reflect on traumatic events in their life, identify positive changes and realise their potential for development. Previously delivered only to mental health service users, Paul was instrumental in working with a range of stakeholders to persuade them that, with adaptations, the project could also benefit people with a learning disability who experience mental health issues. He then advised upon and implemented these adaptations, as well as working to gain the trust of service users and reassuring them over their apprehensions about the project. Second Chance for Change allows people to address emotive and painful experiences, as well as being socially rewarding. Those participating include people with severe mental ill health, substance abuse, personality disorders, and a history of suicidal behaviour, self-harm and violence. A DVD of individuals' stories has been produced and participants act in, and help to produce, a short film. Evaluation of the project has demonstrated its positive impact upon participants, evidenced by increased self-esteem and social activity, improvements in mental health, and a decrease in crisis incidents and self-harming. Paul's nominator concludes that he has exhibited "an inspirational dynamic relationship with a traditionally disconnected service user group". Paul's work was described as inspirational by the judging panel and it commended him for transforming the lives of people who have been marginalised.

# LEARNING IN PRACTICE AWARD

Sponsored by The Open University

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR  
AWARDS PROGRAMME



Judges - John Darcy, The Open University; Anne Campbell, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Caroline Lee, HSC Clinical Education Centre



## **Conor McDowell**

Charge nurse, Royal Victoria Hospital  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Quality mentorship is fundamental to nurse education and training. It fosters effective communication, professional support and mutual respect. Conor is a charge nurse in the Regional Cardiothoracic Centre at the Royal Victoria Hospital and has been nominated by a pre-registration nursing student who undertook a six week practice placement in the ward. The student describes how nervous he felt in view of the fact that this was his first experience of an acute care setting. Conor calmly explained to the student what was expected of him and reassured him about the placement. During the six weeks, the student explains how he gained "an incredible wealth of hands-on experience" in chest drains, venepuncture, care and discharge planning, and the administration of medicines. Conor arranged for the student to attend a surgical session where he was able to enhance his experience through observing a coronary artery bypass graft and an aortic valve replacement. The student describes Conor as "a professional, knowledgeable and caring nurse" who "would do anything for his students" and has "a respect gained from hard work, knowledge and confidence". He concludes: "I left this placement with the belief and enthusiasm that I could take on any challenge that my nursing degree could throw at me". The judging panel was impressed with Conor's passion for developing the nurses of the future. It is clear that he loves nursing and leads by example, providing constant reinforcement to students through their work experience.



## **Sarah Penney**

Research and Teaching Fellow  
Ulster University

Sarah's nomination focuses upon her leadership of a development programme, My Home Life, providing support to care home managers in order to improve the quality of life for patients and residents. Sarah secured the support of home owners to release staff in order to attend monthly action learning sets and practice development workshops. She also recognised that the success of the programme would depend upon the active engagement of patients, residents, relatives and staff. As a consequence of the programme, participants developed their leadership skills and promoted positive cultural change within care homes, with staff reporting high levels of job satisfaction and a greater capacity to cope with stresses and demands. The programme has also led to the introduction of a range of successful practice development initiatives, such as revision of the pre-admission assessment protocol and the production of a short film promoting best practice. My Home Life has enhanced understanding of the need to maintain the dignity and individual identity of patients with end-stage dementia and/or severe communication difficulties, as well as facilitating the direct involvement of patients in decisions about their care. A Reading Rooms programme was introduced and links established with local schools and voluntary organisations in order to promote inter-generational contact. Finally, an information resource has been developed for people living with dementia, and their carers, in considering moving to a care home. The My Home Life programme has been widely shared at professional and academic conferences, as well as within a UK-wide collaborative aiming to improve the quality of life in care homes. It is also endorsed by a range of key organisations, including Age NI, the Regulation and Quality Improvement Authority, and the Independent Health and Care Providers. The judging panel was impressed by Sarah's enthusiasm and how she inspires others to be the best they can be, noting also that she is clearly fulfilled by what she does and has empowered those with whom she works.



# PATIENT'S CHOICE AWARD

Sponsored by the Patient and Client Council

Judges - Eileen McEaney, Northern Health and Social Care Trust; Kathryn Gault, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Maeve Hully, Patient and Client Council

**Patient and Client Council**  
Your voice in health and social care



## **Gaby Jivan**

Staff nurse  
Park Manor Nursing Home, Belfast

Gaby has been nominated by the relatives of three patients for whom she has provided care at Park Manor Nursing Home. All refer to her professional expertise, her caring and compassionate nature, her capacity to go the extra mile to provide the best possible patient care, and the esteem in which she is held by patients, relatives and staff colleagues alike. One of the nominators, the son of a patient with advanced Alzheimer's, describes her knowledge and understanding of the impact of the condition as "immense". He also praises Gaby's capacity to communicate effectively with relatives and provide reassurance. The wife of a patient with dementia and Parkinson's refers to the importance Gaby attaches to keeping family members informed about changes to her husband's condition, as well as her capacity to detect the early signs of such changes and take appropriate action. The third nominator praises Gaby's expertise in the administration of medicines and the significant impact this has had upon her father's condition. As one of the nominators concludes: "I feel she is excellent at her job, very attentive, professional and dedicated. She copes so well in difficult situations with all the different patients in the home." The judging panel noted how Gaby knows her patients on a deeper level and goes over and above what is required of her. She has a real insight into dementia care and a high level of understanding about the impact of this on the patient's family. Gaby is a role model to her team and solution-focused in her approach.



## **Shauneen Breen**

Staff nurse, South West Acute Hospital  
Western Health and Social Care Trust

Shauneen practises in the coronary care unit at the South West Acute Hospital in Enniskillen. Her nomination focuses upon the care she provided to a patient who was admitted following a severe myocardial infarction, the family having been told that she had only two hours to live. The nomination describes how Shauneen provided exemplary care and compassion, ensuring that the patient's nursing and medical care continued unobtrusively alongside the precious time that her family were able to spend with her. Her competence, capacity to communicate effectively with the family, and diligence towards the patient and her family are all commended. The nomination explains how Shauneen's love of her work is palpable and visible, translating into an extremely high standard of nursing care provision. The family describe how Shauneen encouraged and supported the patient in her recovery, recognising also the importance of high quality personal care to the patient's self-esteem and overall condition. The nomination concludes: "We feel it is testament to the nursing care provided by Shauneen that we enjoyed the care of our loving mother for a further nineteen months". Shauneen impressed the judging panel with her strong focus on patient care and equality.

# CANCER NURSE AWARD

Sponsored by Cancer Focus Northern Ireland and Macmillan Cancer Support

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Judges - Liz Atkinson, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland; Heather Monteverde, Macmillan Cancer Support; Loretta Gribben, Public Health Agency



## Renée Reid

Clinical nurse specialist  
Belfast Health and Social Care Trust

Renée is the first clinical nurse specialist in Northern Ireland caring specifically for young people aged 16-24 with a cancer diagnosis. Her post is funded by the Friends of the Cancer Centre charity and this support has recently been extended to enable Renée to undertake the role on a regional basis. Recognised as a clinical leader, expert and champion for young people, she provides support to enable patients to explore their priorities in order to provide a truly holistic service through individual treatment plans, whilst also considering transitional life stages and developmental milestones. To date, Renée has supported over 300 patients and their families in this way. She undertakes age-appropriate holistic needs assessments to run alongside health and well-being events for young people, providing a forum to discuss concerns regarding their treatment and any other related issues. Renée always includes young people and other health professionals in the planning of care, ensuring that the service focuses exclusively on the needs and interests of patients. She has deployed her leadership skills to identify gaps in regional service provision, lobbying commissioners and other stakeholders to develop a multi-professional service across Northern Ireland. In the words of one young person: "Renée is not only interested in our well-being but also our lives outside the disease, our ambitions, friends and hobbies. She is a constant reminder that the disease does not dictate our lives, it is simply a very inconvenient obstacle, and our ambitions and goals can still be achieved. This gave me great inspiration and motivation." Renée has demonstrated innovation and creativity in meeting patient needs and impressed the judging panel with her leadership, resilience and passion.



## Caitlin McCoy

Macmillan acute oncology clinical nurse specialist  
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Caitlin's nomination focuses upon her leading role in the development of the South Eastern Trust's acute oncology service, a partnership with the Health and Social Care Board, Public Health Agency and Macmillan Cancer Support, enabling cancer patients with complications to receive prompt and appropriate access to support and treatment. The service was developed through engaging other departments such as emergency care and palliative care, demonstrating clinical expertise and providing relevant education and training throughout the trust. Some 527 patients were referred to the service during 2016, mainly from the emergency department, and all were seen by Caitlin and her team. The service has improved the care of patients with complications, provided targeted investigations and ensured the rapid triage of patients into oncology and/or specialist palliative care. It has also enhanced the effectiveness of acute oncology services through developing and evaluating the provision of clinical audit programmes, clinical guidelines and operational policies. Perhaps most importantly, the service has improved the patient experience and enhanced the safety and quality of care through what her nominator describes as the "resilience, commitment and determination" of Caitlin and her team. The judging panel observed how Caitlin established the service from scratch and used a solution-focused approach to improving patient care.

# CANCER NURSE AWARD

Sponsored by Cancer Focus Northern Ireland and Macmillan Cancer Support

Judges - Liz Atkinson, Cancer Focus Northern Ireland; Heather Monteverde, Macmillan Cancer Support; Loretta Gribben, Public Health Agency



## **Sally Convery**

Macmillan lung cancer specialist nurse  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

Sally joined the Northern Trust as a Macmillan lung cancer nurse specialist in 2012. After critically examining the assessment process and documentation for patients newly-diagnosed with lung cancer, she identified the need to refine the system to ensure that it more effectively met the needs of patients and their families at this difficult time, as well as improving communication between health professionals in order to enhance the service to patients. Working in partnership with other colleagues, Sally developed a screening tool to provide a basis for a holistic needs assessment which enables all relevant information about the patient and their condition to be shared appropriately within the health care team, particularly with GPs and district nursing services. The screening tool has been incorporated in the cancer patient pathway system and it is hoped it will be available on the Northern Ireland Electronic Care Record in the future. Sally's strong leadership skills have also enabled her to work in partnership with the physiotherapist in the Macmillan unit and other Macmillan colleagues to develop a self-management programme for patients with lung cancer. This is aimed at helping patients self-manage throughout treatment, to anticipate issues that they may encounter, and make them aware of the support services they may need to help them overcome the challenges of living with a diagnosis of lung cancer. It explores areas such as physical fitness, diet, fatigue management, crisis management and provides key contacts for patients. Sally hopes that this self-management model will provide patients with the skills and belief required to help them manage their condition. The judging panel noted that Sally has made a huge difference in a difficult area, using her creativity and advocating on behalf of patients and families.

# DEFENCE NURSING RESERVIST AWARD

Sponsored by Defence Medical Services

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARDS PROGRAMME



Judges - Martin Bradley, Defence Medical Services; Briege Quinn, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Kevin Thomas, Defence Medical Services



## Major Gina Dickson

204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve)

Gina is a registered nurse practising in intensive care and joined the Army Reserve in 2006, being commissioned as a nursing officer in 2008. She has been a regular and key member of the Army Medical Services Tactical Training Exercise, a military skills exercise designed to test individuals both physically and mentally in military and clinical environments. Following success in the previous year's competition, the team was invited to participate in the equivalent Canadian competition in 2016, enabling Gina to display her leadership qualities as team commander. She has twice been deployed to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan and has planned and organised the unit's health care assistant and combat medical technician training and development, receiving very positive feedback from participants. As further evidence of her leadership qualities, Gina has recently accepted responsibility for the development of an intensive care department within the unit. She has also played a leading role in recruitment and is a valuable contributor to the RCN Northern Ireland Defence Nursing Network. Gina's nominator refers to "her outstanding loyalty, dedication and commitment throughout her service to defence nursing and the Army Reserve".



## Lieutenant Colonel Joy McGrath

204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve)

Joy joined the Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps in 1984 and has worked tirelessly for 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve) ever since. She is now the longest-serving reservist Lieutenant Colonel in the unit. Deployed to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan in 2008, she is now Officer Commanding Clinical Squadron as well as practising as a theatre sister in her day job and serving as nurse development lead for theatres. Joy chairs clinical and health care governance meetings, leading on quality assurance and identifying risk. She recently played a key role in the planning and delivery of two internal study programmes and a high profile hospital symposium at the Association of Surgeons of Britain and Ireland Surgical Congress held in Belfast last year. Joy's nominator refers to her "exemplary standards of clinical practice and education", "credibility that gives her an excellent base for the large assurance and governance portfolio she skilfully manages", and her "outstanding contribution to both the Army Medical Services and the HSC trust she serves".



## Major Angela Dolan-Gregg

204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve)

Employed as a Hospital at Night Co-ordinator with the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust, Angela's extensive nursing skills and experience are directly transferrable to her role as an intermediate care nurse and infection prevention and control lead for 204 (North Irish) Field Hospital (Army Reserve). Commissioned in 2012, she was deployed to Camp Bastion in Afghanistan the following year, working as part of the ward team but also encouraging and screening volunteer blood donors and setting up blood collection banks. Angela received the Commanding Officer's Commendation for her work at Camp Bastion. Angela provides infection prevention and control updates and training for all staff within the Field Hospital. In preparation for potential operational deployment, she has recently assumed the position of Defence Operational Nursing Competency lead for the unit, producing a training pack and both developing and delivering a flexible programme related to core and specialist nursing competencies. Angela's nominator praises her "outstanding contribution to the education and training of the military nursing team".



# BROWNLEE-SILVERDALE LEADERSHIP AWARD

Sponsored by Roberta Brownlee and Silverdale Care Home

Judges - Alan Corry-Finn, Western Health and Social Care Trust; Molly Kane, RCN Northern Ireland Board; Geraldine Browne, Silverdale Care Home



## **Claire Black**

Nurse manager  
Park Manor Nursing Home, Belfast

Claire has been nominated by a number of individual staff colleagues who all pay tribute in various ways to her outstanding leadership skills, support for staff, professional expertise and, most importantly, her unrelenting focus upon the needs of patients. One nomination references Claire's willingness and capacity to provide assistance to any nurse requiring it, doing so without complaint and in a thoroughly supportive manner. Another describes the emphasis that Claire places on continuing professional development, recognising the inter-relationship between education and practice development, improving the quality of care and enhancing patient outcomes through effective leadership. She has encouraged health care assistant colleagues to pursue pathways such as Open University NVQ training and Higher Level Apprenticeships, providing mentorship, coaching and supervision. One colleague who was internationally-recruited mentions how Claire supported and guided her through the first months in her role. Another states: "Key factors to her success include Claire acting as an effective role model, providing mechanisms for mentoring and clinical supervision, succession planning and development of career pathways, creating an environment that values clinical competence and the promotion of Park Manor as a centre of excellence." One nominator concludes; "Claire is an advocate for the nursing profession and has performed an essential leadership role in promoting greater nursing expertise through increased staff capability and a new level of competence, producing an excellence of care for the patients". The judging panel commented that Claire is hugely committed to improving the knowledge of staff and aims for the home to be a centre of training and excellence.



## **Sharon Love**

Falls injury prevention nurse  
Northern Health and Social Care Trust

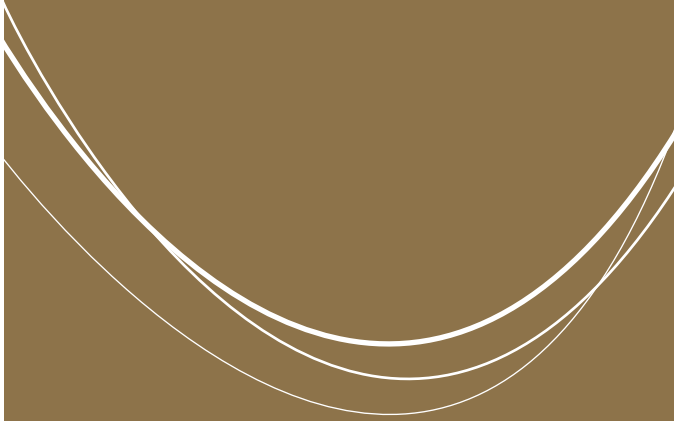
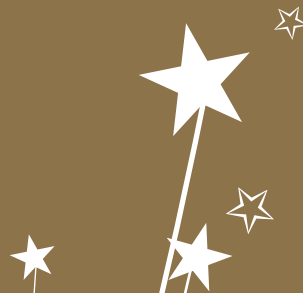
The most common reason for a 999 call to the Northern Ireland Ambulance Service [NIAS] is a fall. The experience can be both distressing and traumatic for patients and their relatives alike. Working in partnership with the NIAS, Sharon identified an opportunity to provide assessment and follow-up in the patient's own home for those for whom this is a suitable alternative to emergency department admission. She explored and researched various protocols, testing and refining them, and developing the role of the assistant falls practitioner to work alongside her own post. Once the falls team receives a referral from the NIAS, they contact the patient to undertake a comprehensive screening, taking account of risk factors, as well as providing education and advice to the patient and making appropriate onward referrals for other sources of treatment and support. Sharon has worked in partnership with a range of other health professionals to help identify patients who may benefit from the service. Evaluation has indicated the safety, quality and effectiveness of the service, as well as its advantages in terms of the patient experience, particularly in reducing the fear of further falls and a consequent loss of independence. It enables patients to be treated and cared for in their own home, rather than being obliged to attend an emergency department, thereby also enabling NIAS and emergency department resources to be targeted more effectively. In the words of her nominator: "Sharon's passion about how this service can improve the quality of life for the older person is exemplary". The judging panel noted how Sharon has an infectious enthusiasm which is reflected in the outcomes of her work. She values the importance of partnership working and engaging with others, impressing the judges with her commitment and patient-centred ethos.

2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR  
AWARDS PROGRAMME



Royal College  
of Nursing  
Northern Ireland

# 2017 NURSE OF THE YEAR



# NURSE OF THE YEAR AWARD

Judges - Charlotte McArdle, Chief Nursing Officer; Robert Sowney, RCN Foundation; Sonja McIlfrack, Ulster University; Marian Traynor, the Queen's University of Belfast; Fiona Devlin, RCN Northern Ireland Board



## **Alana Irvine**

Regional manager  
Four Seasons Health Care

Alana's nomination is based upon her leadership of a programme to reduce incidents of choking amongst older people in Four Seasons Health Care homes. As people grow older and more frail, they risk the development of dysphagia (problems with swallowing), which can lead in turn to aspirational pneumonia or even death. After liaising with other health and social care professionals, including dietetic and speech and language services, in order to set up an expert working group, Alana co-developed a care pathway that comprises a mandatory choking risk assessment and a personalised care plan including dietary preferences. She also developed a poster to promote awareness of choking in care homes. The programme led to a reduction of almost one-quarter (21.1%) in the number of choking incidents recorded during a twelve month period. It also inadvertently led to a significant reduction in involuntary weight loss amongst patients through providing a strong focus on nutrition and eating habits, giving patients a greater say in what they eat and where they eat it. The programme has now been implemented in care homes across England, Scotland and Wales, with similar successes being recorded. As Alana's nominator explains: "The initiative demonstrates how a nurse can identify a potential risk to patient safety and then address it through collaborative working, professional expertise and a focus on the best interests of patients. She has enhanced the safety, quality and experience of people in care homes." The judging panel noted that Alana is a role model for others and how a welcome unintended consequence of her work to reduce choking incidents has been a significant impact upon unexplained weight loss.



## **Fiona Barnes**

Nurse practitioner, dialectical behavioural therapy service  
South Eastern Health and Social Care Trust

Fiona is a member of the South Eastern Trust's multidisciplinary dialectical behavioural therapy service for patients with borderline personality disorders. She works alongside a clinical psychologist and two social workers. The service was established in 2012-2013 and aims to improve the lives of patients with chronic suicidal behaviour, high rates of self-harm and pervasive emotional dysregulation. The therapy involves person-centred engagement with patients in the community to deliver intensive treatment, incorporating mindfulness, emotional regulation, distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness through individual and group psychotherapy, telephone coaching and consultation. As well as delivering the programme, Fiona has audited its effectiveness. The results are significant. The number of crisis contacts for service users fell within the first year from 469 to just 19. The number of in-patient bed days occupied by patients declined from 522 to 39, meaning that people are now able to receive the care they need in their own homes and communities, allowing acute services to focus on those who require in-patient treatment and care. Fiona is currently participating in an international research project to demonstrate further the effectiveness of the service. She also delivers training for other health professionals across the HSC and the voluntary sector, including through serving as a visiting lecturer at the Queen's University of Belfast. Her nominator concludes: "Fiona has been at the forefront of developing a comprehensive service that is delivering new and innovative skills and providing evidence-based therapy to patients. She is a passionate advocate for the service and constantly seeks to influence better care for people with a personality disorder." In the words of one patient: "Above all, you gave me a life worth living. I can see a future; not sure what, but at least there is one and not blank numbness". The judging panel commented on Fiona's passion for her work and the ways in which she promotes, supports and facilitates patients to tell their own stories, recognising that they are the experts in their own condition.





### **Paul Carroll**

Team manager, adult psychological therapy services  
Western Health and Social Care Trust

The incidence of mental ill health in Northern Ireland is 25% higher than in the rest of the UK. Along with successful efforts in recent years to de-stigmatise mental ill health, this has created a growing number of referrals to psychological therapy services, which have a strong evidence base for the effective treatment of depressive disorders, anxiety disorders, post-traumatic stress, bulimia, chronic fatigue and chronic pain. Paul is described by his nominator as “a pioneer in setting the compass for mental health nursing and person-centred mental health services, leading others through his dedication and compassion in caring for people experiencing emotional distress and mental ill health”. His nomination focuses upon his leadership in working with others to transform access to psychological therapies through the Choice and Partnership Approach, creating a therapeutic environment and facilities at Oldbridge House in Derry-Londonderry. As a nurse cognitive behavioural therapist and manager of the adult psychological therapies team in the northern sector of the Western Trust, Paul has an intuitive understanding of the needs of people who use mental health services. He works tirelessly to educate, skill and equip himself and the wider team, embodying the principles of person-centred practice and performing as a role model for colleagues. Paul’s nominator concludes: “Every day, he gives inspiration to people facing the challenges and loneliness of mental ill health by delivering collaborative evidence-based psychological therapy with human compassion and instilling hope on their journey to recovery”. The judging panel noted Paul’s passion for nursing, together with his firm belief in the potential to turn a life around and build both recovery and hope.



### **Siobhan Rogan**

Team manager and advanced nurse practitioner  
Southern Health and Social Care Trust

Siobhan’s nomination focuses upon her leading role in establishing Northern Ireland’s first community-based fully integrated child and adolescent mental health service [CAMHS] for young people with intellectual disability. These young people have high rates of complex mental health and behavioural difficulties. Often they are unable to access comprehensive, specialist services. Within the Southern Trust, Siobhan has established specialist teams within CAMHS, providing early intervention and holistic biopsychosocial assessment through to high intensity intervention. The service employs nurse practitioners, assistant practitioners, a consultant child and adolescent psychiatrist and, most recently, a clinical research practitioner. Siobhan devised the job descriptions and development pathways for staff members, ensuring that they receive training in areas such as behavioural interventions and non-medical prescribing. She successfully applied for funding and has established strong links throughout the region and via cross-border support networks. The service provides innovative early intervention in order to promote better long-term outcomes for young people. It embraces community development and co-production projects such as therapeutic film-making. Siobhan has helped to meet a previously unmet need, ensuring a rights-based equality of access to CAMHS services for young people with intellectual disability, improved referral pathways, the delivery of effective interventions, improved risk management, a reduction in the use of psychotropic medication, and high levels of service user satisfaction. Her nominator describes Siobhan as “an outstanding leader and brilliant colleague who is changing the face of services for children with intellectual disability in Northern Ireland”. A parent of one child said: “The help we got here has not only saved his life, it has saved my life”. The judging panel was impressed with how Siobhan recognises the need to look after staff and be guided by the promotion of equality. She places great emphasis on the rights of the child and believes it to be important that parents know which services are available locally so that children do not have to travel outside Northern Ireland where possible.











# OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT AWARD

Sponsored by NIPEC



The Outstanding Achievement Award is aimed at recognising outstanding 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 MBE
- 2012 Elizabeth Henderson OBE FRCN
- 2013 Professor Hugh McKenna CBE FRCN
- 2014 Margaret Graham
- 2015 Roberta Brownlee
- 2016 Robert Sowney





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