

## Care Home Example Application

**2. IN SUPPORT OF YOUR APPLICATION** – please read the excellence profile in the guidance document and give us examples from your practice of **how** your expertise matches the areas below. Please remember this is not a job application, we are not looking for a list of achievements, rather your ability to reflect and describe the impact of your skills and behaviours on others. Each statement begins with the question HOW?

### How have you made a difference?

- changing how things are currently done
- making things better for individuals, families and communities
- helping others to make a significant impact

When I started in my role as a dementia nurse consultant, I was tasked with writing the organisations dementia strategy. I have always worked in collaboration with those living in care homes throughout my career and so being asked to write a strategy based on my own interpretation of the national dementia strategy and the organisations current policies didn't feel like it would be effective as it wouldn't involve the people it would impact.

I reflected on my previous experience and wrote a proposal that would see me travel around all 26 of the care homes to gather feedback from those who live and work in the care homes as well as other stakeholders and yet still fitted the deadline I had been given. I did not face much resistance to the proposal as the organisation was on its own person-centred journey and this idea fitted well with their thoughts.

There was a real lack of trust when in the services staff felt that it didn't matter what they would say as this would not be taken on board, 'seen all this before and nothing ever came from it' was a common theme. I reflected a lot on the feedback I was receiving and spent a lot of time building those relationships ensuring what I had said did progress.

Staff, residents, and families all had different ideas for what they wanted from the strategy and what good dementia care was for them. When fitting all their ideas together into a jargon free easy read strategy it took several edits. Each time I sent the draft out to families, residents, staff someone else would pick up on a word they were not sure of or that they thought made the policy too wordy and so another rewrite would go out.

On reflection I realised that even though I was used to writing jargon free you never know what words may cause confusion for an individual or group of people. Although rewrites were time consuming they also produced new ideas from people and greater support for the strategy, families, residents and staff volunteered to lead training sessions, support projects and a group of inspiring, engaged and motivated individuals already appeared when the strategy launched.

Seeing others develop and find their passion to make a difference is something I personally enjoy and when I look back my revalidation many of my reflective accounts focus on supporting individual's development. On reflection the dementia strategy was the success it was and saw the change it did because it involved everyone and saw a range of people develop that has added to my belief that in order to make something successful we must include all those who it impacts.

(no more than 3500 characters which is around 500 words)

### How have you demonstrated your tenacity and resilience?

- finding your way across boundaries, around obstacles, through bureaucracy
- successfully challenging attitudes
- finding new doors to open each time one closes
- being prepared for continuous change, development and transformation

As a care home nurse we face a lot of stigma and there are many barriers because of this with people believing that if you are a care home nurse you have become deskilled and that career progression is not possible. I have tried to address this stigma throughout my career by promoting care home nursing and the innovation in the sector and continuing the progression of my own career goals.

Challenging attitudes at a higher level has not always been easy, working in small family run organisations does not always get you invited to events or onto panels, but I have never let that stop me using whatever channels are available to promote the innovation and the people who live and work in care homes. I am active on twitter and not afraid to challenge where I see stigma. I also write a lot and showcase not only my own work but best practice from colleagues and others in the sector.

Thanks to the work creating the dementia strategy and the positive outcomes from this, I have been invited more recently to speak at a range of events across the UK. As the strategy was written in collaboration I rarely attend events on my own, wanting to make sure people are supported to tell their stories, sometimes families or residents don't want to get up on stage but want their stories told so we would work together to produce video clips, or picture shows that showed their story how they wanted it told. It is these stories that change attitudes about what positive outcomes and careers are possible in care homes.

My interest in dementia care started as a care assistant and continued as a student nurse. As a student nurse my first obstacle was getting a placement with an organisation who did not take student nurses at that time. I successfully convinced both the university and the organisation that having a student nurse placement with them would be good for my development and for them. I still reflect now on the experiences I had as the first student nurse in the area at the organisation and the impact it has had on my career.

The current pandemic has meant as nurse managers we have had to draw on our resilience and tenacity to manage the changes, and support colleagues, families and residents through while maintaining our own wellbeing as more and more is asked of us. This has involved a lot of reflective discussion but also simplifying guidelines, so everyone understands what is being asked and why. The greatest benefit coming from easy read posters we have created.

I reflect a lot on the opportunities I have been given and how I have been able to shape my career through exploring my own career goals and how each project has opened doors onto the next and how each course I have completed has resulted in change and development of my own role.

**(no more than 3500 characters which is around 500 words)**

### **How have you brought people with you?**

- using your enthusiasm and persuasive nature
- creating a ground swell of support and getting others to commit and get things done
- staying connected with important others
- working with crisis as a development opportunity.

The success of the dementia strategy was around getting people on board, not just listening to what they wanted but actioning it. People would come along to one of the dementia ambassador meetings and nobody including me did not leave the room inspired by what we had achieved together in that two months. It was the trust and communication that built that enthusiasm, the dream of what we could achieve together and seeing that progress towards that dream.

Working across large geographical areas was not always easy and initially commitment wasn't always full but I always see challenges as a development opportunity a chance for me to show why it can work and find ways to support others to find ways that it can work for them. As people started to see the results things started to change. We worked together as a team to put Namaste care in place across all the care home services as well as cognitive stimulation therapy. Staff, residents, and families would come to our two monthly meetings and talk about the changes these had made to wellbeing.

One family member spoke of the difference in her mother's communication and how improved visits had been with namaste care finishing 15 minutes prior to her visit. It was an emotive story, where the impact on both her mother's wellbeing and hers was felt by everyone in the room, and afterwards the remaining four homes who had not commenced the program did. It is not always about your own enthusiasm on reflection I have found that it is using your connections, that network you've built from your work to help you to drive forward projects and ideas, all working together to create that swell of support that people can't help but recognise and feel.

The dementia strategy was so successful in creating that swell of support that I had people from as far away as Australia come over to meet with us, invites down to London to share the work. It was always a two-way thing, as I learnt as much from them as I am sure they gained from me, it all helped build the support for the program.

We all realised that any challenge or crisis that we came up against we could find an answer together. Often there was someone in our network who had faced the same challenge previously and even if it was something new, together we would find a solution and that became our goal to always focus on solutions rather than problems.

**(no more than 3500 characters which is around 500 words)**

### **How have you demonstrated your ability to reflect?**

- listening deeply, seeking to understand what really matters
- approaching life reflectively, always learning
- quick to attribute success to others and not seek credit
- showing kindness for yourself and others

My very first article in a journal was a careers piece in Nursing older people on my role as a dementia nurse consultant and one of my pieces of advice in that was 'Like any job there will be 'difficult shifts' however these can always be learning opportunities. Reflect on them and what could be done differently to achieve a better outcome.' I have learnt as much from what has worked well as I have from what has not worked.

Dementia care is something I am passionate about and has seen a lot of change through the years as have care homes with advances in the use of technology and the ever-changing environments. I have found reflection and listening to others helps me to look at what is and is not working. I use the practice of observation daily in my role as quality care and improvement manager and reflect on what I have heard and seen. When we are observing as well as listening, we can pick up much more about

what a person is trying to convey or hiding, and these can make the biggest difference on improving outcomes.

When I won the RCN nurse leader award in 2018, I saw this as an opportunity for the program. I made sure that any pictures in the local press of the award were of the team. Working on feedback from the team I managed to successfully put forward a funding proposal to the board of directors for a training suite of equipment to support staff to experience what it was like to live with a range of different conditions. The staff enjoyed the experiential learning program so much they asked about exploring ways to support members of our local community to be able to have these same experiences. Together we supported community experience events in the care homes. These events not only helped build support for the program, but I gained a lot of feedback that helped us shape the learning. Two of my team then went on to win an award for community engagement and the use of the equipment which supported their development.

I use reflection a lot to support others having regular reflective conversations with other staff members and have a set of strength cards which we use together where we each identify their strengths, I find this helps the flow of the conversation. I am not as good at being kind to myself and accepting praise. This is something I have had to work on over the years as I am often too hard on myself and so I use reflection to support being kinder to myself. The revalidation process has helped that kindness to myself with reflective conversations with my peers and I enjoy the process every three years not just my own but having the discussions with others.

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**3. WHAT IS YOUR VISION** for the role of Queen's Nurses in Scotland's communities and why would you like to be selected for this year's cohort? Do you have a vision of what the *best you can be* looks like and feels like and the changes you would like to see in the community you work with?

I am passionate about promoting the role of the care home nurse and the successful career you can have in care homes having always pushed myself to learn more and develop and go forward for different opportunities. I recently completed the dementia specialist improvement leads program and found working with nurses and people from a range of different roles benefitted my learning and this integration and collaborative work across organisations is something that is important to me and that I believe I can develop in the Queen's Nurse programme.

I feel that being part of the Queen's Nurse programme will not only support me to promote care home nursing but will also give me the opportunity to highlight to a wider audience the benefits of collaborative working and how by working together you can improve outcomes for a range of people.

There are many changes I would like to see for care homes but the biggest of these is greater integration. There is work ongoing on integrating health and social care however the current pandemic has highlighted that we still have a lot of work to be done. I see being part of the Queen's Nurse programme can help me to be involved in that work by having that platform to be able to promote the innovation within the care home sector and how nurse led quality improvement programs with multi-organisation and stakeholder input can make a difference. I want to be able to

show and empower others from my own experience to trust that collaboration can and does work and how it can support greater success in improving outcomes.

I hope to be selected as part of the Queen's Nurse programme to not only share my own knowledge and experiences but to learn from others and create new connections to continue to promote not just the role of care home nurses but the range of people who work across the community to support positive outcomes for individuals. I see being part of the Queen's Nurse programme as being about celebrating the range of different roles in community nursing and how we can together make a difference.

It would also be a great honour to be a Queen's Nurse and to be part of that history and I want to thank you for considering my application to join the programme.

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**4. YOUR ISSUE FOR DEVELOPMENT** – please read the guidance document and tell us about the issue you have agreed with your sponsor which you will develop over the course of this programme. Please set out the nature of the issue or community need you wish to address, who will be involved, how you plan to engage those affected and what you hope might be achieved, whilst recognising that the emphasis is on co-production so that plans will emerge as you listen to the views of others.

Throughout the application I have spoken about my drive for working collaboratively on projects and the value of relationships with this in mind I want to use my time if successful in the application to work on a relationship centred care strategy for the organisation. This has been something I have thought about for a while but Covid has meant it has taken a back seat. With a place on the program this will give me structured time to work on the development of this strategy. The strategy will look at how we are supporting and valuing relationships and supporting collaboration.

Relationship centred care is a personalised and collaborative approach to delivering care that supports a resident's individuality and values their relationships. Relationships can be with/between the staff team, residents, families, the local community, as well as relationships with objects and the environment. Each of these relationships are important for promoting wellbeing and maintaining a good quality of life on a day to day basis. Person-centred care, which is part of relationship-centred care, involves treating people as individuals with dignity and respect, and enabling them to make choices about their care based on their needs, preferences, interests, and life history. Relationship Centred Care takes person-centred care and the need to ensure we recognise each individual one step further by focusing on a partnership approach based on strong and positive relationships. A relationship centred culture values all relationships, so this strategy as well as exploring ways that is being fostered with residents will also include families and staff relationships.

To help shape the strategy, I will link it with the Health and Social care standards. The health and social care standards are about supporting outcomes for individuals. The objectives of the standards are to drive improvement, promote flexibility and encourage innovation in how people are cared for and supported. These objectives fit well with the benefits of what good relationship centred care is. It ensures all parties feel that they belong, that they

matter within the home, and within the wider community and that they can make and achieve their goals.

The value of relationships has been highlighted through the pandemic and it is these relationships that have gotten us this far in the pandemic. I want to evidence within the strategy the value in relationship centred care. I will create the strategy by having Microsoft team focus groups for families who are currently unable to attend the care homes due to restrictions. I will meet with residents and staff one on one and listen to what they want from a relationship strategy and create questionnaires as well as using the practice of observation. Throughout the production of the strategy I will send out drafts and gather feedback in order to build a strong collaborative relationship centred strategy that reflects all views.

My hope for the strategy is that it helps build on that family culture already in the organisation, supports better outcomes for residents, families and staff but also that it supports everyone to feel involved in how they are supported and builds stronger relationships internally and externally.

**(no more than 4000 characters which is around 550 words)**

Please check your completed application before it is emailed to QNIS. **All sections** must be completed or the application cannot be put forward to the assessment panel.