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**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. 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

Throughout my nursing career I have had the privilege of having undertaken a wide range of roles that nursing can bring and none has been more challenging than my current role. Each prior role has led me to this point in my career and supported my leadership role as a school nurse team leader. When I started this post, school nursing was going through a transition and redefining its role nationally. The Scottish Government now required all school nurses to have a Specialist Community Public Health qualification studied at master degree level. The Scottish Government also provided extra funding to train and build on the current school nursing workforce by 100% within our local authority to help meet the expanded school nursing role. Ten key priority pathways have been developed which include: emotional health and wellbeing; substance misuse; child protection; domestic abuse; looked-after children; homelessness; youth justice; young carers; transitions; sexual health.

My first goal when joining the team was to provide consistency and nurture to the school nursing team, as over a short period of time the team had to deal with various changes (e.g. management changes, new team members and new expectations within their role) whilst still maintaining a service during a health crisis to the most vulnerable children. School nursing was changing, no longer it was “the way we have always done it” it was becoming more focused in its approach in supporting vulnerable children and young people. I viewed my role within this, was to highlight the positives to my new team and colleagues that this is a great opportunity to build, shape and improve a service to ultimately benefit the children and young people in addition to them becoming a more enhanced workforce and individual practitioners.

I worked closely with the senior management of the locality both profession side and operational side to plan for the current workforce to be seconded for the year whilst undertaking the academic commitment, this was staged and incrementally done to ensure that we fully supported the staff but maintaining a quality service that was safe and effective. On reflection I am proud of the achievement of the team during what was a very difficult and challenging time. We are on track to achieve the aim of all of our school nurses having the required qualification and recruited to the commitment set out by the Scottish Government.

Recently the moral of the team was captured through an imatter report and all of the captured responses were above 90% and highlighted that I was approachable, the team feel well supported and the overall morale of the team was high. This indicated to me that my leadership style and approach has been effective and having a positive impact.

**(350- 500 words)**

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

- finding your way across boundaries, around obstacles, through bureaucracy
- successfully challenging attitudes
- being prepared for continuous change, development and transformation

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As previously discussed above, changing jobs during the pandemic was challenging, however taking on a leadership role heightened the anxiety as there were many challenges that lay ahead and many unknowns. The school nursing service covers a very large geographical area and the team are split into different locations and are not altogether. Some members of the team had not even met each other as some were also new to the team. This was also in part, a result of the restrictions due to Covid-19 and it was not possible for everyone to come together. This created a barrier to the function of the overall team as it created factions and the loss of the one team dynamic. To overcome this I very quickly established more frequent virtual meetings as a way of coming together in addition to 1-1 sessions with individual team members. This allowed me to convey my vision and priorities of the school nursing service, at the same time giving everyone a chance to interact and connect in a safe place. One of my main priorities was to create a culture and environment of inclusion, enjoyment and a sense of belonging which allowed the team to not only practice autonomously, but to have the sense of belonging to a wider network of support. I feel that initiated the teams understanding of the challenges that were ahead and that they felt fully supported to rise to these challenges. It was important at this stage to express not only that they had a role to fulfil, but also what the bigger picture was in achieving the school nursing service goals of improving health outcomes and giving children and young people the best possible start. Often during this time, I had periods of doubt and questioned my own ability to be a leader and often suffered from feelings of imposter syndrome, however I believed in what I was trying to achieve and maintained a positive mind-set and a tenacious attitude. This has stood me in good stead and has enhanced my leadership skills. I can now say with confidence that our team has a shared vision and are striving to reduce health inequalities and promote positive outcomes for vulnerable children and their families.

(350-500 words)

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

- creating a groundswell of support and getting others to commit and get things done
- staying connected with important others
- working with crisis as a development opportunity

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As described previously the best way to build relationships is to be honest, open and transparent which helps to gain trust and respect. I have had a number of roles throughout my career, which have helped me gain a wide range of knowledge, experiences and skills, including experience as a school nurse. I feel that I demonstrate a positive role modelling type behaviour and leading by example, has allowed me to gain the trust and credibility of the team. The way this was achieved, was through building positive relationships, demonstrating respect and empathy, and by listening and getting the team involved in any decision making not only as individual practitioners but also as a collective team. The environment created has given everyone the opportunity to contribute safely and without judgement. Becoming a leader, I was acutely aware that difficult conversations and challenges were inevitable however, listening and treating people with a caring attitude reduced resistance to the change that was required.

My ethos as a team leader has an emphasis of support for my team and looking after their health and

welling including their emotional and mental wellbeing. We have daily safety briefs or huddles as a way to check in on each other every day and this provides another opportunity for staff to check in with their peers and seek support if required. This was important during the COVID pandemic as there was a real possibility of team members feeling isolated and becoming disengaged. The daily check ins have continued as the team have expressed that it necessary for them.

We have a very hard working and committed team striving to do their best for the children and young people that they work with, so it is important that we celebrate their success. The team have achieved a lot, including being the only school nursing team in Scotland to have been nominated for a Quality improvement award for 2 separate improvement projects, and was successful in winning one of them. In addition, we received 2 nominations for the Scottish health awards “Top Team” category. This highlights the significance of what we are trying to achieve, recognises the team for all their hard work and reinforces that what they are doing is making a difference. This has enabled members of the team to grow in confidence and become increasingly skilled practitioners who are more accepting of the direction of change and willing to continue on the journey.

Their success is my success.

(350- 500 words)

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

- listening deeply, seeking to understand what really matters
- approaching life reflectively, always learning
- showing kindness for yourself and others

Having been a nurse for almost 20 years, reflection has been a vital part of my development not only as a professional but also from a personal perspective. Reflection is ingrained in us from the outset so it becomes second nature and a normal way of nursing life. Reflection is something that I do on a daily basis whether it is my own self-reflective practice or on a more arranged structured session with my senior management support team. This allows me to reflect on what has gone well, what areas I need to improve and helps me plan how to make the changes I need to make too improve.

Reflection is something I actively encourage within my team, offering regular supervision sessions. These do not always have to be structured or planned and quite often, they occur through conversations and discussions. I feel this is a direct result of the nurturing environment surrounding the team, making them feel secure enough to express their thoughts and feelings, highlight any concerns and be able to come up with solutions, thus building on their own reflective practice.

Having been nominated for this fantastic learning opportunity, it has given me space and time to reflect on my own achievements over the past couple of years particularly whilst in my new role. Quite often, it is difficult to see what has been achieved whilst in the midst of change and what feels like upheaval at times. This has highlighted the importance of taking stock and being able to take a step back to look at what has been accomplished, to celebrate my own success and be happy with my part in the success of the team. I feel that I have grown as a leader; my role has provided me with the ability to explore new ways of working, a chance to network with other colleagues from other areas and disciplines and to share good practice. Regardless of what status, position or title we obtain, there is always more to learn.

As a leader, I have developed new skills and incorporated a variety of leadership styles into my everyday practice. My views on reflection have grown and developed over my 20-year career. Reflexivity allows me to question my own beliefs in a reflective format, which can only occur through

constant questioning and reflecting on my own ability and practice.

(350- 500 words)

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?

My vision is to continue to build on the achievements of my team and to continue to build a resilient workforce and a productive team. Ultimately, it is about improving health outcomes, reducing health inequalities and giving our most vulnerable children and young people the best possible start by ensuring that they get timeous services and positive life experiences to achieve their optimal self.

I am very passionate about my work in building a skilled sustainable workforce that has resilience, capacity and longevity that meets the needs of the children and young people we work with. To become a Queens’ nurse would enhance my ability to champion for the most vulnerable children and young people, broaden my network and allow me to connect with other Queens’ nurses and experts.

The main aim of the school nursing team is to work in a coordinated partnership approach to support vulnerable children, families and care experienced children and young people as outlined in the aims of “The Promise” and to contribute to the ambition that all children in Scotland will grow up loved, safe and respected (Scottish Government, 2022).

The Promise was brought about by the independent care review and was built on what children and young people had to say. The care review highlighted that so many care experienced children and young people did not feel loved, safe or respected. By listening to these experiences of the “care system” Scotland made a promise that every child and young person grows up to feel loved, safe and respected in addition to ensuring that every child and their family gets the support they need and when they need no matter if they have to live elsewhere. Care experienced children are entitled to the same opportunities and expectation as everyone else. This is something that the Government has committed to and has set a deadline for 2030 for this promise to be kept.

Being a Queen’s nurse would allow me to become an ambassador for school nursing within my locality and to be able to support other people considering nursing or becoming a Queen’s nurse and have the same passion and desire to ensure that every child feels loved, safe and respected.

#keeping the promise.

(350- 500 words)

Please answer *either* question 4a or 4b. If you are applying for the main cohort, please answer question 4a. If you are applying for one of the Burdett Trust for Nursing funded places with a focus on primary prevention of cardiovascular disease, please answer question 4b.

**4a. 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, and who you might involve, whilst recognising that the emphasis is on co-production so that plans will emerge as you listen to the views of others.

My issue of development is in line with the keeping “the Promise” to our care experienced young people and provide them a platform where we are able to authentically capture their views in relation to their own health and what care is right for them. This will include empowering them to become invested in their own health to ensure that they achieve the best possible outcomes and reduce future health inequalities. This would give me the opportunity to ‘think outside the box’ and develop new strategies to capture their voice.

Part of this development would be to build a platform where that children and young people would have the ability to self-refer into the school nursing team, as currently this does not exist within the health board area.

**(no more than 150 words)**

**4b. YOUR ISSUE AROUND CVD PREVENTION 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, and who you might involve, whilst recognising that the emphasis is on co-production so that plans will emerge as you listen to the views of others.

- What is the nature of the issue you wish to explore and the evidence of its importance?
- How will you involve citizens, colleagues from across health and care, as well as local authority and third sector partners involved in the issue under review?
- What do you hope will be the short-term and long-term impacts of this initiative?
- What are your initial ideas about how the £2,500 grant might be used, recognising that plans will change as they are co-produced?

**(300 – 500 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.