



Shining a light on London's exceptional general practice nurses

To celebrate International Nurses Day 2021, Kathryn Yates, our Director of Nursing asked people across London general practice to 'shine a light' on the contributions of their nursing colleagues over the course of the Coronavirus pandemic. Below are the groups and individuals who we have been asked to recognise and why they deserve such credit.

Nurses in Greenwich

Nominated by Claire O'Connor and Laura Davies, Joint Nurse Leads for Greenwich Health Training Hub, who say:

"We have so many Nurses in Greenwich that have gone above and beyond during these difficult times and would love to celebrate them all. We have picked out the following for the following reasons:

"Oneda Sulaj is an HCA at Plumstead Health Centre who has worked tirelessly to help set up the PCN vaccination centre, she has been working seven days a week supporting the PCN. This involves physically working at the centre, setting up the rota, organising stock, staff, volunteers, food, patients call and recall. Oneda does all this and still manages to answer queries on the same day, and with a smile!

"Jo Simmonds is a nurse working at Royal Arsenal Medical Centre, she also works in A&E at QEH and at the Greenwich & Bexley Hospice, in addition to all of those roles she has been a tremendous support for one of the trainee nursing associates in Greenwich, attending meetings where required and generally being really supportive and engaged.

"Lindsey Wood is a nurse working at Manorbroom Medical Centre, she is a constant in Greenwich and well thought of amongst her colleagues, she is always helpful and ready to answer questions and gets involved when anyone needs her expertise or support.

"Kate Irving is a nurse working at Vanburgh Medical Centre, during the pandemic Kate's nurse colleagues were shielding so Kate held the fort to protect her colleagues, she went over and above during this time, working tirelessly for her patients and was an example to us all."

The nursing team at the Nightingale Practice, Hackney.

Clare Ashton, Advanced Nurse Practitioner; Joanne Buckley, Practice Nurse; Jane O'Beirne, Trainee Degree Nurse Apprentice; Davinia LaForce, HCA and Trainee Nurse Associate; and Adeany Silva, Phlebotomist, were nominated by Mary Clarke CBE, Director of Nursing and Corporate Development at City and Hackney GP Confederation. Mary says:

"All of them carried on seeing patients throughout Covid adapting to changes quickly and effectively. At no point did the pandemic alter the care that our patients received. They worked on Saturdays doing Covid vaccinations and have decontaminated and cleaned their little hearts out. I could not be more proud of them. They each deserve to have a light shone on their courage, commitment, and hard work. The GP Confederation would absolutely support this nomination."

Joanna Howgate, Senior General Practice Nurse, Fullwell Cross Medical Centre, Redbridge.

Nominated by Sarah Walker, HCSW and AHP Practice Development Practitioner, Barts Health, who says:

"During the past year Joanna has continued to support her elderly frail and long-term conditions patient base. Utilising a mixture of telephone and e-consultation skills. She has, like many general practice nurses, worked seven days a week to ensure no one gets 'left behind'; whilst new priorities overtook the primary care landscape. As the practice has a very large client base (20-25K) and she is one of two nurses employed. She had an overwhelming workload which she has shouldered without complaint. Joanna has been selfless in her time, always being front and centre at the PCN Covid vaccination hub which was based at her surgery (removing the burden from other practices in the PCN)

"Why should Joanna stand out from other general practice nurses in the same situation? She has juggled her work and personal life with a stoicism rarely seen. She has undergone two spinal surgeries, supports an adult son who has a learning disability and during the pandemic gave a home to a teenage mother and her new baby. It is a privilege to know her and would be delighted to see her recognised in some way as she would never seek it herself."

Lelita Chang, Practice Nurse Rosewood Practice, Hackney

Nominated by Sonia Kaur, Practice Manager at the same practice, Sonia says:

"Lelita is the most amazing, compassionate, energetic person I have met in my lifetime, she never fails to say no. At her wonderful age of 70+

she is still going strong and helping the public. Lelita is the hero of our practice she always fits patients in, even if she doesn't have a slot, her calm nature puts patients at ease and her valuable advice is so appreciated by staff and patients.

“Lelita hasn't taken any time off during the pandemic, in fact working extra hours to visit patients at home, not once was she show concern for her own safety, she is so selfless and has even done vaccination home for all patients that were housebound. I take my hat off to her, she really is our shining star, and we should applaud her!”

Kay O'Moore, GPN, Hornchurch Library Local vaccination Centre, Havering

Nominated by Nora Rao, Strategic Nurse Lead Barking, Havering and Redbridge GP Nurses, who says:

“Kay has utilised her extensive nurse and practice manager skills to ensure that patients, staff and volunteers were safe and well cared for.

From setting up the pods, to managing and receiving the vaccine and supplies in between continuing her dual role of PM/GPN at Upminster Bridge Surgery.

She also ensured that the refreshment area was continually stocked for staff and volunteers.

“Keeping us going came in the guise of Kays chocolate treats in those long but rewarding days when we vaccinated so many people. South PCN Havering were delighted to receive a letter from the Health Secretary congratulating us for being one of the best performing sites in the country.

Kay deserves a special mention for going over and above her remit, and continuously looking for ways to make things easier and smoother for all involved in making this site such a success.”