

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

I began working for the Organisation in September 2017 when I was selected to be the deputy manager at the Care Home. The care home was to open in October 2017, as this was a new care home part of my role and responsibility was to assist the home manager and the head of care for older people in supporting the staff with this new journey we were about to embark on.

This was a huge challenge as not only were all the staff newly appointed and required to bond as a team, but many of them also had little or no experience in caring for people with visual impairment.

Many of the staff who were appointed to work in the Care Home had previous experience in the caring environment and part of my role was to develop the teams ideologies of what care should look like. I encouraged staff to be brave and take appropriate risks with the residents to promote our philosophy of care by empowering residents to take their own risks and make their own choices and decisions in a safe environment. This was a big change and step for many of the staff as I was often met by them with answers like “but what if something happens to the resident”.

This change of mind set and ethos was something that took considerable time to embed in staff within the home, however once achieved made a significant and positive difference to the way in which our residents lived their lives in the care home. This is something, which will continuously be promoted throughout the care home with all the current and future staff.

As the care home is a specialist service in supporting individuals living with a visual impairment this is something I really wanted to focus on, not only within the Organisation but also across the area as a whole. Visual impairment is often not identified by people correctly and can have a huge effect on a person’s wellbeing and the way they are cared for within the care home environment. Educating people on the care of someone with a visual impairment has become a true passion of mine.

Since joining the Organisation in 2017 I have branched out to other private care providers and staff within the NHS to try and establish a network which enables me to be in regular contact with people delivering care to older adults living with a visual impairment. I have been successful with this to some degree and have been able to provide training for front line staff working with people with a visual impairment. However, I know there is still work to be done with this and will continue to network with providers to assist in any way I can for older adults across the local area.

(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

Looking back, my first senior management role in 2015 proved to be a significant challenge. This was due to initial resistance I experienced from junior management colleagues within the care home who were more experienced than I was. I was promoted internally after having only worked in the service for 13 months at a young age of 24.

Due to the resistance experienced by my colleagues, I felt an overwhelming need to prove not only to myself, but also to everyone else within the work place that I had the ability to successfully carry out the job I had been employed to do.

To overcome this barrier and implement the required change, I spent significant time with all staff in both an educational and practical environment supporting them and being a visible presence. This enabled me to clearly identify what my expectations and aspirations would be for the successful running of the care home and how as a team I wished the staff to reach these goals with my ongoing support.

Now working as an experienced Deputy Care Home Manager, one of the ongoing challenges I currently face is managing people's expectations. This is often in relation to our resident's relatives; ultimately, the relatives are expressing their wish for the best possible care and outcomes to be achieved for their loved one. However, this expression can be portrayed in a negative or derogatory manner, which can make front line staff feel anxious, upset or experience fear in their work environment.

My role as a manager is to not only support and resolve the relative's needs during times of feeling stress or conflict about their loved one, but to also act as a support and advocate for the staff member on the receiving end of the relatives concern.

To overcome the above obstacles I make myself visible and known to all our visitors. I always have an open door policy and ensure that I spend appropriate time with relatives to establish an open and trusting relationship where relative's views and opinions feel valued.

I have identified through observation of relatives concerns that often these come from a lack of knowledge or understanding in regards to the conditions their loved one is living with, in particular visual impairment and dementia. To try and improve or enhance the relative's knowledge of these conditions and the impact they have on a person's life, myself and the Home Manager in the care home have set up and delivered education sessions for relatives and visitors to the home. These education sessions have been tailor made to suit the level of understanding that a person with no clinical background knowledge can easily understand. These sessions have proven so far to be positive for relatives as evidenced through documented feedback forms.

I have also found that communication within the full team is key in reducing the likelihood of a relative becoming upset or stressed about a situation, which may arise. To improve the communication within the home I have formulated a written tool, which is completed daily. This tool is completed in a meeting format with a nurse from each unit and member of management team present. This enables managers to be fully updated and document all clinical happenings and concerns within the home, and allows suitable advice and reflection of practice to be shared amongst the full clinical team. Therefore overall reducing likelihood of concerns being raised, due to the increased communication within the home.

(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.

Since starting with the Organisation there have been many changes to the service within the Care Home. One the biggest changes within the home is the management structure. In the last 12 months, we have had 2 Staff Nurses promoted to a Charge Nurse role. Neither of these nurses had management experience and so I played a pertinent role as their line manager to support and develop the transition from Staff Nurse to Charge Nurse.

Having previously been through an internal transition myself and knowing the difficulties this can impose, I wanted to ensure that both nurses were fully supported to enable them to carry out their new role in a comfortable and safe environment where they could develop their skills naturally in a managerial position. A vital part of this process was to supervise their practice and offer any required support. I also spent significant time with both nurses to educate them on the more senior skills that are required and supported them to learn positive ways to achieve these skills. I believe communication and reflection is vital to develop and so set up weekly supervision time for both nurses in an individual and group setting for the first 3 months of their new role.

Since both of the Charge Nurses have been promoted, with the above support both have successfully completed probation and are still in their current position striving to be the best they can be. They have both demonstrated a willingness to continue with peer reflection and plan time each month with each other to continue this sharing of knowledge.

Within the Care Home we use an online medication programme. This is something which has been in place since opening the Care Home however I identified through regular supervision and audit that staff were struggling with this. More often than not, staff were resistant to use the system as worried they would make a mistake and frequently asked if we could change the system to a paper based one. I spent considerable time supporting the staff on a one to one level with the use of this and encouraging them to embrace the system rather than fear it.

Despite my efforts to reassure and guide the staff involved in medication management, I recognised the staff still did not feel confident in the use of the online programme and errors began to appear when using the system. At this point, I set out to identify ways to take a different approach in improving the knowledge and confidence of the staff as was determined to make the system a success.

I firstly arranged meetings with community pharmacy and our NHS care home liaison nurses to seek any advice they could give. It was imperative to begin this process by involving these key people so that we could work collaboratively to come up with the best solution to solving the problem we were facing.

Through these meetings, I was able to identify another care home who were successfully using the same online system as the Care Home. I then made contact with the other care home and was able to set up user friendly training sessions for all staff to attend. Following these training sessions, staff have become much more comfortable and confident with the system and audit scores have markedly

improved, proving the overall success which can be achieved when care services work collaboratively together for the overall benefit of the service users we care for.

(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

I feel I am a very patient person who takes time to listen to other people's values and opinions, despite whatever distractions or obstacles may be in the back of my mind. I believe it is truly important that all people feel valued and are given appropriate time to express their feelings, ideas or opinions.

I am often told by the staff in the Care Home that they feel I am approachable and that they would feel comfortable talking to me if they were upset in anyway, this is something I value very much and pride myself in. I always ensure I have an open door policy for all people whom I may come in to contact with in the Care Home including residents, staff and visitors.

Something I have recognised through reflection throughout my nursing career is that staff sometimes worry that the manager "is too busy." This is something, which I am always very self-aware of so in the last 6 months I have set up weekly staff clinics whereby staff have an opportunity to come and see me regarding any matter they wish to discuss, this can be in relation to a work or personal matter. I enjoy taking this time to have discussions with staff as I feel it allows them to really open up to me and creates a positive working relationship with the staff member as they feel more valued and respected.

As I have indicated throughout my application, I am very self-aware that reflection is important in the role I hold. I feel it is something which needs to be done frequently throughout my practice as both a manager and registered nurse to allow me to learn from each of my experiences and develop my practice for the future.

I revalidated last year and during the process, I was able to use examples from my working practice to reflect on what really matters to me and the staff team that I work with. I feel confident in saying that I use supervision in my current role to express my feelings about work in a positive way. I have found that although I reflect regularly in my working and everyday life, by completing my revalidation I was able to truly acknowledge what I have so far achieved in my nursing career. This allows me to recognise my strengths and weaknesses, which enables me to plan how to overcome my areas for development.

I would say that I feel I am very self-aware of the power of being kind and believe I actively always endeavour to continue to deliver kindness in all walks of life. I believe people should be praised for doing something well or be recognised for the good they have done. In regards to being kind to myself, would say this is something I do not do as often as I could, however recognise this as an area for development and is one of the reasons I am so keen to achieve the QNIS status.

(no more than 3500 characters which is around 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?

I consider myself to be an ordinary person who perhaps would not stand out in a large crowd as I am naturally a quieter personality. My hope would be that through being selected as a Queen's Nurse I would be able to gain the ability to encourage others like myself to have the confidence in grabbing opportunities such as the Queen's Nurse Programme where you can to make small changes to meet your career aspirations.

I am particularly motivated to promote the role of a care home nurse within the area, or even better, Scotland. I am aware that throughout the last few years care home nursing has become more recognised, however this still has some way to go. Too often, the care home nursing role is misunderstood and people do not recognise the great work that goes on in care home environments. There are often misconceptions that nurses who work in care homes become de-skilled or go to work in care homes as an unwinding process before retirement.

Having been a care home nurse my full nursing career, I would like to use the Queen's Nurse programme to share my knowledge of care home nursing with fellow nursing staff. I want to tell everyone that as a care home nurse you are anything but deskilled, you continue to be a skilled nurse and a great leader due to the environment that you work in. Furthermore, I would like to spread the word that care home nursing can be just as innovative as any other field of nursing practice.

Being an employee of the Organisation has also shown me the challenges people living with a visual impairment can have on a person. Visual impairment is a hidden disability that can affect all aspects of a person's daily living. People often think of the physical effects a visual impairment can have on a person and are not always aware of the emotional or psychological effects visual impairment can cause. If selected to be a Queen's Nurse it would be my vision to share my knowledge and experience in caring for people with a visual impairment and provide education and support to others working in the healthcare industry to recognise the importance of this all too often hidden disability.

Working for the Organisation is an absolute pleasure. As a nurse as it encourages you to be brave, take appropriate risks and implement positive change. This is something I have not often seen in previous work experience in a care home environment, as all too often people are worried of something going wrong. If given the opportunity to be a Queen's Nurse I would love to empower other care home nurses to be bold and feel confident to implement new ideas in this ever-changing industry.

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

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.

As I have already expressed throughout my application, one of my passions is providing excellent care to people who are living with a visual impairment. It is estimated that 171,000 people in Scotland are living with a diagnosed visual impairment (RNIB 2017) and this will continue to rise over

the coming years. My objective is to focus on supporting older adults living in care homes with a visual impairment as at present, there are limited services to assist people. My aim would be to become an education link to front line staff delivering care to people living with a visual impairment by holding training sessions, and offer any advice or support regarding individual service users if and where appropriate.

In order to achieve my issue for development there would firstly need to be involvement from NHS services and the local authority social work department. I would need them to be involved in raising awareness of the support that could be made available so that we could support as many people as possible. Although my goal is to ultimately support those living in older adult care homes, I would be in time keen to establish this across all care home services including respite and adult services. Once established that support can be available to other services, I would need other care home managers/providers to pro-actively work collaboratively with me to establish a common ground of interest in the need for this support/education and cascade the service I wish to provide to their team. The Organisation as a charity would also need to be involved in this to empower me to fulfil this aspiration, this is something that I have already identified and agreed with my sponsor.

Once I have been able to establish links that enable to me carry out my issue for development I would plan to adapt a training programme that is bespoke to the needs of the service I am visiting. I would endeavour to make the training clear and easy to understand with the focus being on how to support and care for a person with a visual impairment to live a fulfilling life while always maintaining a person centred approach. I would also spend time with the staff in a practical setting to gain first-hand experience of what life is like for a visual impaired person by using the simulation glasses pack that we have within the Care Home. I would do this, because I believe that to truly understand what visually impaired person is feeling you have to experience this yourself to fully appreciate the challenges this hidden disability can have on day-to-day life.

I hope to be able to achieve the QNIS status, as it would be an honour to promote the care home nursing role across Scotland.

I hope that if I am successful in being considered to be a Queen's Nurse, I would be able to make the dream of required change become a reality and help more people across Scotland living with a visual impairment.

Thank you for your consideration.

**(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.