Patient’s Choice
Meet this year’s five finalists

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Voting opens on 1 May to choose the winner of the Patient’s Choice category of the RCNi Nurse Awards 2019. The award enables members of the public to thank a nurse, midwife, health visitor, healthcare assistant or assistant practitioner who has provided exceptional care. Voting is open to everyone.

Voting closes at midnight on 14 June. The winner will be announced at the RCNi Nurse Awards ceremony in London on 3 July. To vote, go to nurseawards.co.uk

The Patient’s Choice award is supported by the Patients Association

SARAH EVERETT
Practice sister, Govan Health Centre, NHS Greater Glasgow

Red tape could not stop this nurse’s enthusiasm
Sarah Everett knew many of her male patients were socially isolated and lacked access to meaningful activities. Keen to make a difference, she consulted patients including John Alexander about creating a place where men could meet, enjoy each other’s company and pursue practical interests.

The project is now a charity, part of the Men’s Shed movement, empowering men who are retired, unemployed or unfit for work to take control of their health. ‘She was sensitive to our mental and physical health needs and knew there was little motivation to make healthy lifestyle choices,’ says Mr Alexander, who nominated Ms Everett.

‘Driven by her can-do attitude, a derelict nursery was completely transformed’
“She has been the driving force and so willing to go the extra mile for men like us, dedicating hours to navigating red tape with her infectious enthusiasm. She motivates us to keep going even when dealt bitter blows,’ says Mr Alexander, pictured above, fourth from left, with Ms Everett and other Men’s Shed regulars.

Ms Everett secured funding from QNI Scotland. ‘It was obvious we needed dedicated premises,’ says Mr Alexander. ‘Ms Everett liaised with council officials to secure a derelict nursery. Driven by her can-do attitude, it was completely transformed.’

Cookery courses are among the options at the Shed, which also has polytunnels where the men grow fruit and vegetables. ‘The Shed has changed lives,’ says Mr Alexander. ‘People have a reason to get up in the morning and face what used to be problems but now have become challenges.’

Ms Everett says: ‘The men worked so hard to transform the building, and its impact has been powerful. One told me he had gone four months without seeing someone before the Shed.’
Innovative support brought patient back to health

‘The care Emeka Madubeze showed me brought me out of the darkness and crafted me into the resilient and empowered individual I am today,’ says nominator Zaynab Sohawon.

Ms Sohawon was psychotic when she was admitted to a child and adolescent mental health services secure unit after attempting to take her own life.

‘His innovative ideas have had a dramatically positive impact on my life,’ she says.

When Mr Madubeze (pictured above) became her named nurse, Ms Sohawon (inset) says she had no idea it was going to be the ‘best thing to happen’ to her.

‘I was shown empathy, patience and never-ending diligence. His gentleness, integrity and professionalism eased me into my journey to recovery.’

She says Mr Madubeze’s perseverance and encouragement led her to successfully embrace physical exercise as a coping strategy.

‘My mother says Mr Madubeze encouraged me to achieve recovery in a way that she, as a parent, never could, and he always kept her informed of changes in my care.

‘She says he always took the time to explain exactly what difficulties were perpetuating my mental illness and how best to approach me.

Mr Madubeze says: ‘I was pleased but shocked to hear Zaynab had nominated me.

‘When you do this kind of work you don’t do it for nominations, you do it to support young people towards recovery and empower them to get on with their lives. You do it to help young people and their families.’

 clinical excellence and problem-solving were invaluable support at a critical time

One day Jonas Thorsen and Catherine Dwyer were discussing losing their spouses to cancer when they realised they had something in common – outstanding care from district nurse Andrea Jennings.

Ms Dwyer says the clinical excellence of the Queen’s Nurse made a huge difference to her husband’s quality of life.

‘She is proactive and a problem-solver,’ says Ms Dwyer, who along with Mr Thorsen, nominated Ms Jennings (all pictured below). ‘She gives of herself and cares for not just the patient, but their families as well,’ adds Ms Dwyer.

Referring to Mr Thorsen’s wife, Yvonne, she says: ‘When Yvonne was admitted to the hospice, Andrea telephoned and visited to see how she was. When Yvonne returned home, she had Andrea’s personal mobile number so she could call her at any time.

‘Between 6pm and 8pm there is no nursing cover in the area. Andrea would always phone to check whether Yvonne needed any pain relief before the night nurses took over.

‘After our spouses died, Jonas and I both appreciated Andrea’s ongoing care.’

Ms Jennings says: ‘I’m not one for being in the centre of the limelight. I was a bit taken aback when I received the call to say I had been nominated.’

She stresses that while she made an extra connection with these patients, the care provided was a team effort.

‘My brilliant team was working hard looking after other patients, so I was able to give these patients extra support. I am so lucky to have had them,’ Ms Jennings says.

‘She gives of herself and cares for not just the patient, but their families as well’

‘I was shown empathy, patience and never-ending diligence’
An amazing source of support

Jacqueline Cowan was enjoying university with her whole life ahead of her when she was diagnosed with cancer.

‘It was one of the scariest moments in my life, and my parents were equally terrified,’ she recalls.

However, Valerie Miller, whom Jacqueline has nominated, was ‘an amazing source of support’ through those early days and the treatment that followed, including making Altnagelvin Area Hospital in Londonderry a home from home.

When she learned Ms Cowan loved gaming, she even found a way for her to have access to an Xbox video game console while in hospital.

‘I am so grateful to have Valerie in my life,’ says Ms Cowan, pictured above with Ms Miller.

‘Nothing was ever too much for her. She was there for my first chemo session and my last and many in between.

‘She has sat with me talking about everything and anything just to distract me from the treatment.

‘She has given advice and stayed at work late just to make me and my mum a cup of tea after a particularly hard day at the clinic.

‘She has found ways to make me laugh even when I wanted to cry, and I can’t think of anyone more deserving of this award.’

Ms Miller says: ‘I feel humbled that Jacqueline nominated me after all that she has been through. I cried when I heard – I still can’t believe it.

‘She is such a lovely, bubbly person and I have loved being able to support her.’

Valerie Miller
Teenage and young adult clinical nurse specialist, Western Health and Social Care Trust, Londonderry

She gave me choices and I finally felt I had input into my care plan

Victoria Wilson
Nurse practitioner, Healthcare Centre general practice, Preston, Lancashire

A nurse with a refreshingly holistic viewpoint

A car accident changed Nicola Davies’ life. Six years later she was still experiencing back problems, arthritis in her hip and chronic neuropathic pain, not to mention the trauma’s psychological and social effects.

‘From the moment I met Victoria Wilson, I felt that she listened,’ says Ms Davies, pictured below left with Ms Wilson.

‘And she looked at my case holistically, which was so refreshing. She showed courage in changing my medication. She gave me choices and I finally felt I had input into my care plan.

‘She discussed my lifestyle and work shift patterns along with my emotional status before finding something that would fit into my life rather than me having to make more adaptations.

‘I left that first consultation feeling much more positive and in control.’

And Ms Wilson followed through, regularly phoning her to see how the pain was and adapting medication accordingly.

‘Whenever I have issues regarding my pain or my newly diagnosed Graves’ disease I feel reassured that Victoria will be there to listen and act on the changes.’

Now Ms Davies, who is herself a nurse, has nominated Ms Wilson.

Ms Wilson says: ‘Nursing is a profession where you get on with doing what you need to do – so even a thank you card is treasured. I was just doing my job.

‘Nicola has been through so much. She’s been incredibly brave and patient with each thing she has faced, so it is touching that she has taken the time to nominate me for this award.’