



Press release – Monday 18th January 2021

Voting Opens as Our Health Heroes 2021 Finalists Announced

A record number of public votes are expected, to crown the 5th Our Health Heroes Awards national winners, recognising the extraordinary people at the heart of our NHS and social care workforce.

Never has there been a tougher task for the Our Health Heroes Awards expert judging panel, than to arrive at this year's shortlist of awe-inspiring finalists, from over 600 nominations. Out of the heartbreak of the last twelve months, come stories of pure courage, passion for preserving life, and a devoted innate kindness, by our nations' healthcare support workforce.

John Rogers, Chief Executive, Skills for Health, said: *"In any given year, trying to identify a "winner" of Our Health Heroes is, of course, near impossible. But after 2020, our NHS, health and social care staff in their entirety are truly deserving of an award. Reading through the submissions is humbling and emotional, in recognising the outstanding contribution by so many across the sector, over the last twelve months, and as we speak."*

These unsung heroes, often working behind the scenes, have never asked for a medal, glory or even recognition, in fact, most if asked, simply brush it off by saying *"it's just part of my job"*. Yet, it is these individuals who form the backbone of our NHS, social care, and independent healthcare organisations, and without whom, our health system simply could not function.

John adds: *"The vaccination programme is a huge endeavour, but its benefits will take months to have a positive impact on the current stresses across our health and care systems, yet we will watch as staff continue to rise to the ongoing challenges. If we did not already know this, then all this year's Our Health Heroes nominations make it very clear, that the sheer commitment, compassion and unwavering resolve of our NHS people will carry us beyond the pandemic and on to better times."*

With a shortlist of 15 exceptional finalists, Skills for Health together with partners NHS Employers, UNISON and Bevan Brittan, are now encouraging both members of the public, as well as health and social care colleagues, to have the final say on who should be crowned national winners at the virtual Awards ceremony in March. **And the finalists are...**

Apprentice of the Year sponsored by UNISON:

- Sofia Goodchild, Apprentice Partnerships and Integration Administrator, NHS Castle Point and Rochford CCG
- Isa Ullah-Khan, Apprentice Healthcare Assistant, Nottingham University Hospitals NHS Trust



- Janine Pring, Apprentice Respiratory Physiologist, North Bristol NHS Trust

Outstanding Contribution sponsored by NHS Employers:

- Cordy Gaubert, Clinical Specialist Physiotherapist, Bradford Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Janis Hostad, Education and Development Coordinator, Hull University Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Dr Amit Arora, Consultant Geriatrician, University Hospital of North Midlands

Operational Services Support Worker of the Year sponsored by UNISON:

- Marie Smith, Ward Clerk, St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust
- Laura Hurford, Learning and Development Senior Administrator, Welsh Ambulance Services NHS Trust
- Tina Hughes, Domestic Assistant, 2gether Support Solutions, East Kent Hospitals University NHS FT

Clinical Support Worker of the Year:

- Claire Petford Norton, Healthcare Assistant, Milton Keynes University Hospital
- Eileen McCullough, Support Worker, Belfast Health and Social Care Trust
- Thomas Gregory-Smith, Community Support Worker, Older Adult Community Mental Health Team, Oxford Health NHS Foundation Trust

Independent Health and Social Care Worker of the Year:

- Joshua Mizen, Specialist Support Worker, Thompson's Homecare
- Peter Morris, Gardener, St Raphael's Hospice
- Steve Singh, Driver/Support Worker, Sahara Care Ltd

[Vote for your winners here!](#)

Voting opens today, Monday 18th January, and closes on Monday 8th February.

The judging panel included representatives from Skills for Health, NHS Resolution, NHS England and Improvement, and category sponsors NHS Employers and UNISON.

Rebecca Smith, Managing Director, NHS Employers said: *“NHS Employers is proud once again to have the opportunity to sponsor the Outstanding Contribution award, to ensure we recognise all our teams, who go above and beyond for our patients every day.*

“This is a wonderful way to shine a light on those whose contribution and dedication deserves to be recognised and celebrated, but who often go unacknowledged, and it’s especially welcome now, at a time when the COVID-19 crisis continues to place an unprecedented strain on all our staff.”



Sara Gorton, Head of Health, UNISON said: *“Now more than ever, it's vitally important the work of the entire NHS family is recognised and celebrated. The past 10 months have been extremely challenging.*

Staff have been placed under extreme and unprecedented stress and, in many cases, pushed to the limit. But the pandemic has also reminded us that the NHS cannot function without the entire team. When the stakes have never been higher, the porters, cleaners, administrative staff, IT technicians, reception, and security staff – and the many other roles often overlooked for praise or awards – have risen to the challenge.”

“The Our Health Heroes Awards rightly focuses on those unsung employees whose crucial work is often overlooked. UNISON is proud to sponsor the operational services support worker and apprentice of the year categories at this year’s awards.”

Finalists and nominees will be celebrated at a virtual awards ceremony with sector leaders, colleagues, friends and family on March 23, where the national winners of the individual categories will be awarded gold, silver and bronze, and the winners of the [Integrated Team of The Year](#), [Learning and Development Project/Team of the Year](#), [Independent Health and Social Care Worker of the Year](#), [Health and Wellbeing Employer of the Year](#), and [Digital Innovation Person/Team](#) will be announced.

Follow [#OurHealthHeroes](#) on Twitter for all the latest updates.

End.

Notes to editors

About Skills for Health

[Skills for Health](#) is a not-for-profit organisation committed to the development of an improved and sustainable healthcare workforce across the UK. Established in 2002, as the Sector Skills Council for Health for the UK health sector, it is the authoritative voice on workforce skills issues and offers proven solutions and tools, with the expertise and experience to use them effectively.

About UNISON

[UNISON](#) is one of the UK’s largest trade unions, serving more than 1.3 million members. They represent full-time and part-time staff who provide public services, although they may be employed in both the public and private sectors.

About NHS Employers

[NHS Employers](#) is the employers’ organisation for the NHS in England. They support NHS workforce leaders through practical tools and resources, expert advice, and guidance, and by listening to employers to ensure their voice is represented in health policy and practice.

Contact details

Press: Tara Duffy, PR & Communications Manager, Skills for Health



Tara.duffy@wdtrust.org.uk