

Opportunities and surprises

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Being a nurse is not only a wonderful thing, you also become part of profession that brings opportunities and surprises. Since retiring from the NHS, I have taken the opportunity to do some travelling. As well as going abroad, I have travelled around the UK.

On a recent trip to Aberdyfi Art Gallery and shop in Gwynnedd, mid-Wales, to my surprise I stumbled upon a signed copy of *The Forgotten Heroes of World War 1*, written by Menna Lloyd Jones, a former, much valued trustee of the Wound Care Alliance UK (WCA), now retired. It is a revelatory account of the Voluntary Aid Detachments and their care for the sick and the wounded. I was particularly impressed by the fact that 200 000 dressings per month were produced in Britain at the time. Menna clearly highlights the contribution of nursing, the care and the challenges of wound care—and the poem by the member of the Edinburgh War Dressings Supply Organisation she has included is a joy.

Another opportunity I have taken up is to represent the WCA at various national events. I attended the *Journal of Wound Care* conference in March, where there were some interesting presentations. It was great to talk and, importantly, listen to members. I recruited some new members and a new trustee or two. As I say, life can be full of surprises. One of the presentations was given by Unna Adderley, director of the National Wound Care Strategy Programme (NWCSP). If I had one word to describe her, it would be inclusive. She outlined the strategy and workstreams in place to support it. The NWCSP objectives include ensuring that care is well organised, evidence informed and achieves better healing rates, better patient experiences and makes better use of NHS resources—these are all issues that resonate with all of us who are passionate and committed about tissue viability. Specifically, the NWCSP aims to scope the development of a national wound care strategy for England to improve the care of:

- Pressure ulcers
- Lower limb ulcers
- Surgical wounds.

Dr Adderley stressed that, as the workstreams develop draft recommendations, these will be shared for consultation with the relevant stakeholder forums. So, if you are interested in wound care and want to be included, sign up to a stakeholder forum at bit.ly/2RB72yL to have your say. The *NHS Long Term Plan* (NHS England, 2019) has finally been launched; it was delayed, but it now includes important information on community nursing. The plan guarantees that investment in primary, community and mental health care will grow faster than the NHS budget overall. However, although there are good intentions, will there be sufficient clinical staff to deliver the agenda?

The national agenda is undoubtedly commendable, but the irony of losing the nursing bursary and now the inability to recruit will not be lost on many of us. The plan, developed in conjunction many trust and clinical commissioning group (CCG) executives and clinical staff marked official abandonment of the policy of competition in the English NHS established by the Health and Social Care Act 2012 . Without repealing the legislation, integrated care systems are to be created across England by 2021, with CCGs merging. Having struggled within the 'competition system', many of us will see this as progress.

Delivering the *NHS Long Term Plan* (NHS England, 2019) therefore offers major opportunities, with the emphasis on having a 'collective view' on how to improve care. Ensure your voice is heard by completing a short survey online at bit.ly/2EL8o1S

This is a critical time in wound care; there is a genuine need to focus on innovative solutions that will improve wound healing, prevent harm, increase staff productivity and bring financial savings in line with the requirements of the long term plan—and the NWCSF has the opportunity to contribute.

Lloyd-Jones M. The forgotten heroes of World War 1. A story of the auxiliary hospitals and voluntary aid detachments of Merioneth 1914–1921. London: Catford Print Centre; 2018

NHS England, NHS Improvement. The NHS long term plan. 2019. <http://tinyurl.com/ydh7y999> (accessed 19 March 2019)

Article published in British Journal of Nursing 2019, Vol 28 No 6, Tissue Viability Supplement