# Press Release | 13 August 2024

**Hospital awarded for support given to international healthcare staff**

**The QEH has been awarded the NHS Pastoral Care Quality Award for International Nurses & Midwives for the high-quality support the Trust offers.**

The [NHS Pastoral Care Quality Award](https://www.england.nhs.uk/nursingmidwifery/international-recruitment/nhs-pastoral-care-quality-award/), part of NHS England’s [International Recruitment Programme](https://www.england.nhs.uk/nursingmidwifery/international-recruitment/nhs-pastoral-care-quality-award/), launched in March 2022 and supports NHS trusts to develop and enhance international recruitment plans.

To achieve the award The QEH had to meet standards for pastoral care developed with regional and local international recruitment leads and international nursing and midwifery associations.

The Trust was recognised for its commitment to delivering high-quality pastoral support to internationally educated nurses and midwives. This support starts from the recruitment phase and is key in building relationships ahead of arrival to promote the sense of belonging to Team QEH. The hospital’s Education Faculty Postgraduate Education Lead, Rebecca Galer, holds regular meetings via teams with nurses ahead of their arrival to The QEH.

The Trust has developed a welcome booklet which contains key information from pre-employment through training and on to deployment as UK-registered nurses. The hospital also provides in-house training and support for staff taking their objective structured clinical examination, which is required for registration in the UK, as well as buddy schemes, cultural awareness and wellbeing sessions, and support with finding accommodation.

Bhawna Sharma, originally from New Delhi is a Junior Sister at The QEH and praised the Trust for the help and support she received when she joined in 2019.

She said: “The support I have received has been outstanding and I couldn’t have asked for better.

“Relocating from New Delhi in 2019 was the first time I’d left India – it was so different for me and I didn’t know what to expect. Now, five years later, I am still receiving support and guidance. I feel blessed by God to be around so many lovely people and especially thank Sister Lanie, Sister Wendy and Sister Penelope for their mentorship.”

Caroline Gisborne, a Workforce Resourcing Officer at the hospital, has been a key member of the team offering pastoral support to colleagues. She said: “We understand the decision for someone to leave their home, and possibly their family and friends, and move to another country for a career in the NHS, is not something they take lightly. This is why the safe arrival, induction, and the provision of support we offer our overseas staff during and after the recruitment process is extremely important to us.

“As well as ensuring we are looking after their wellbeing it also helps the new staff to integrate with the Trust and get to know their new work colleagues as well as our local communities.”

In the last 12 months The QEH has welcomed 99 internationally educated nurses and midwives that graduated in countries such as Sri Lanka, India, Kenya, Nigeria, Ghana and the Philippines.

Helen Muncey, Head of Education Faculty at The QEH, said: “I am delighted that the NHS Pastoral Care Award recognises the effort of our teams in supporting our internationally educated nurses and midwives as we work to become one of the best employers in the NHS.”

**Ends. Notes to editors;** For media enquires only, please contact Communications Team, [media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk](mailto:media.enquiries@qehkl.nhs.uk) or 01553 613216. For all other enquiries, please contact QEH Switchboard on 01553 613613.