



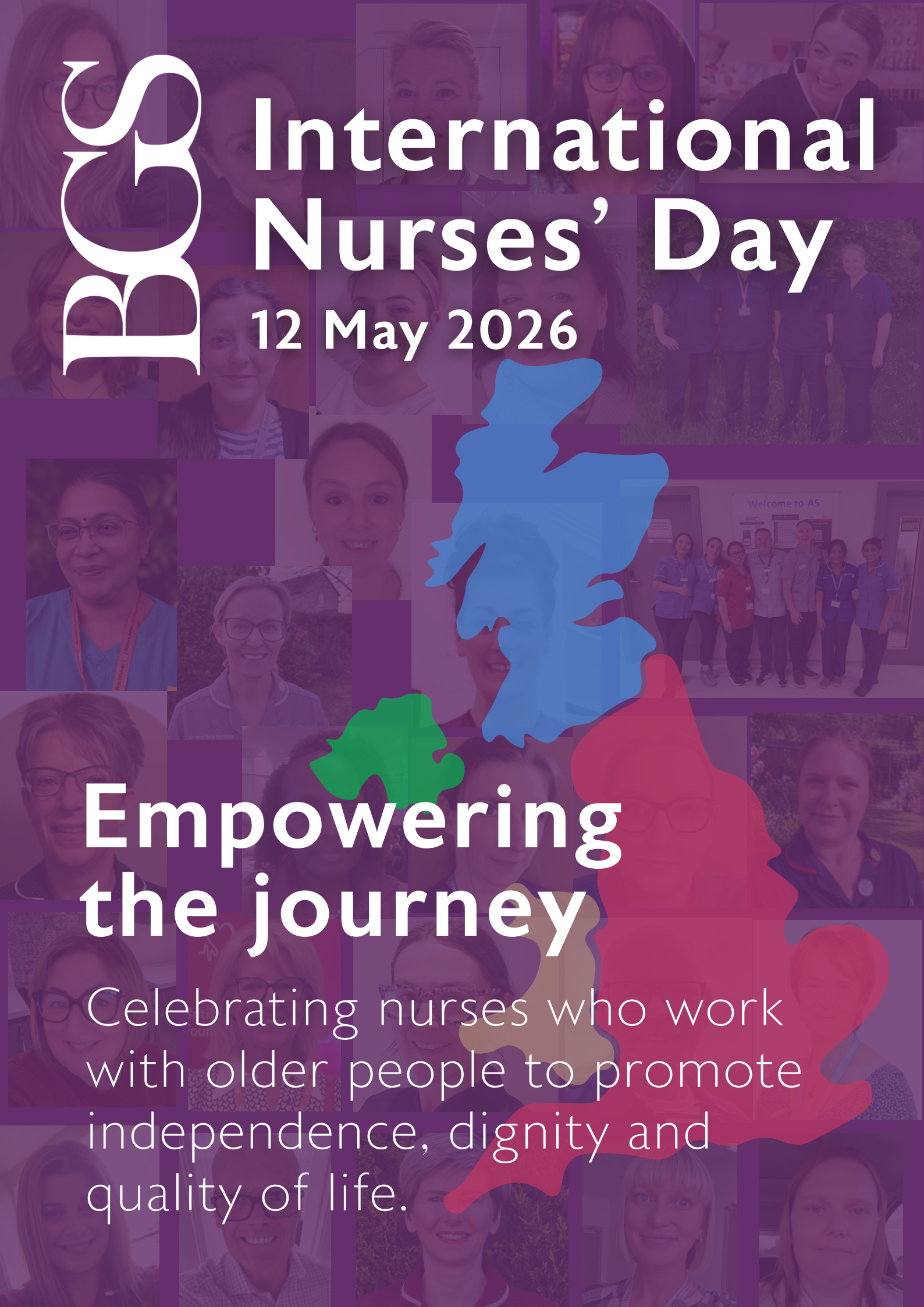
International Nurses' Day

12 May 2026



Empowering the journey

Celebrating nurses who work with older people to promote independence, dignity and quality of life.





A message from Lyndsey Dunn, Chair of the BGS NAHPs Council


I am truly delighted, in my role as Chair of the British Geriatrics Society Nurses and AHPs (NAHPs) Council, to once again bring a four nations approach to celebrating International Nurses' Day.

Across England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, we come together to honour the phenomenal contribution of nurses who work with older people. Professionals who, every day, promote independence, uphold dignity and enhance quality of life for those they care for.

This year's theme, Empowering the journey: Celebrating nurses who work with older people to promote independence, dignity and quality of life, reflects not only the essence of our work, but the values that define us as a profession.

This year also marks a very personal milestone for me, as I celebrate 25 years working within the NHS, something I am incredibly proud of. My journey into nursing has not been a traditional one. I began as a Higher National Certificate (HNC) student and progressed through different roles, including working as a clinical support worker before qualifying as a nurse. This has given me a grounded understanding of care at every level of the system. It has shaped who I am as a leader and strengthened my belief in creating opportunities for others to enter this wonderful profession through alternative pathways. I am a strong advocate for widening access into nursing and supporting people to grow and develop across their careers.





My passion for working with older people is deeply personal. It stems from the close relationship I had with my grandmother, and the experiences I witnessed during her care, particularly when she experienced delays in hospital that impacted her health and wellbeing. Those moments have stayed with me and continue to shape my values and drive my commitment to improving care across health and social care.

I often reflect on her simple but powerful sentiment. Time is not ours to prescribe. For me, this captures the essence of what it means to care for older people. Supporting older adults can be more than a prescriptive treatment plan. Instead, it is about taking the time to ask, “What matters most to you?” and ensuring that care is built around that. It is through these conversations that we truly promote independence, preserve dignity and enable people to live the best possible quality of life.

As I reflect on the past nearly two years since being elected to this role, I am reminded what a privilege and an honour it is to work with older people. In many ways, it is about caring for those who once cared for us. A responsibility that should never be underestimated.

This approach requires compassion, skill and a deep respect for the individuality of every person we support. It also requires us as a profession to continue lifting each other up. We need to share knowledge, champion best practice and empower one another to lead and innovate.

So today, it is my pleasure to introduce and celebrate our four nations community. Together, we will continue to strengthen our collective voice and recognise the extraordinary work happening every day across our services.

Let us continue to empower each other.

Let us continue to lift one another up.

Most importantly, let us continue to be a voice for older people.

Happy International Nurses’ Day to each and every one of you.

ENGLAND



Lucy Lewis

On International Nurses' Day, as a nurse writing up my PhD on cancer decision-making in later life, I celebrate how nurses empower older adults through choice. By listening, explaining and advocating, Cancer Clinical Nurse Specialists walk alongside older people from diagnosis onwards, enabling informed decisions that honour dignity, independence and quality of life.

Elaine Francis

In our Care for the Older Person team, we see how giving staff and older people a genuine voice transforms care. As a vital part of the MDT, nurses help drive this - so people feel heard and valued, and confidence, dignity and independence can grow.



Carys Barton

At the heart of care for an ageing population, heart failure nurses lead with compassion, expertise and unwavering commitment. If we are serious about improving outcomes, we must continue to champion and strengthen nursing leadership because independence, dignity and quality of life depend on it.



ENGLAND



Cliff Kilgore

As the largest professional group in healthcare, nurses provide a high level of skill and knowledge and are key to ensuring older people's care is person-centred, whether that focuses on a health crisis, supporting improvement or enabling end of life care. Nursing can work across so many different areas both in the NHS and within the many other sectors where older people are seen or supported. A vital member of the MDT, nurses are often pivotal, and the role of patient advocate is something many of us recognise in what we do.

Angeline Price

Caring for older people is a privilege that allows us to deliver truly individualised, person-centred care. I value the opportunity to advocate for each person's wishes and priorities, ensuring the care we provide respects their dignity and supports their independence. Empowering older people to live well, on their own terms, is at the heart of what we do as nurses.



Rachel Thompson

As a specialist Lewy body dementia Admiral Nurse, I provide tailored biopsychosocial support to families and work in partnership with them to ensure person-centred care. This approach enables and empowers families to access the care they deserve wherever possible, adjust to their situation and learn new skills in achieving the best quality of life they can.



ENGLAND



Frazer Underwood

Nurses are active everyday, in every health and care setting, driving new discovery, delivering research and implementing evidence into practice to promote independence, maximises dignity, and improve the quality of life for older people. Look around, get curious and most importantly get involved with the evidence implementing and research active nurses close to you on Nurses' Day and beyond.

Vanitha Regunathan

I reflect on my experiences as an internationally qualified nurse in frailty care. Each encounter with an older person teaches me something new and unique. Through their stories, they show me that independence, dignity, and person-centred care are universal values that connect us all. Together, as a team, we work to promote quality of life for the people we care for with kindness and skill, embodying the true essence of nursing and the heart of frailty care.



Amanda McAndrews

Working in the Care Home Matron role at Sussex Community NHS Foundation Trust is important to me because it allows me to support older people to live with dignity, independence and compassion. I value delivering person-centred care that recognises each individual's needs, preferences and life story. Promoting independence, even in later stages of life, helps maintain confidence and quality of life. A key part of my role is supporting sensitive conversations and completing RESPECT documents, ensuring individuals' wishes for end-of-life care are clearly understood and respected. This is essential in providing dignified, compassionate care.



ENGLAND



Lesley Bainbridge

This International Nurses' Day, as we celebrate empowering the journey of older people, I want to shine a light on nurses working in social care, who consistently promote dignity, independence and quality of life, often beyond the spotlight in the shadow of the NHS. Too often, inequity and misunderstanding are felt between nurses across settings, yet our shared purpose should unite us rather than divide us. Let this be a moment to value all nurses equally, recognising that social care nursing remains a steady, skilled and compassionate force for older people, whatever changes happen around it.

Fiona Green

As a Lead Advanced Clinical Practitioner specialising in frailty and complex care, it is a privilege to work with and advocate for older people in achieving what matters most to them, ensuring that they live life to the best they can, avoiding the need to go to hospital and remain surrounded by those they care about. Teaching, supporting and empowering other health professionals to be the best they can be in providing excellent care to our older people is my passion. Striving for quality of life is the key agenda that drives my values, beliefs and pride as a nurse.



Sue Lyne

East Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust Community Frailty Practitioner service helps older people in East Sussex to live more independently and with dignity. We consider our role to be crucial in the care of older people living with varying degrees of frailty and, as such, it is a privilege to work with our patients to help them meet their healthcare needs and positively affect their quality of life.



SCOTLAND



Joy Reid

Within our Frailty Team, we understand the importance of having honest conversations with patients and their families, and ensure we find out what matters to them. This allows the team to work in partnership with patients and their loved ones to respect their wishes and deliver person-centred care in the place that they prefer.

Careen Mullen-McKay

Working in Scotland across health and social care, third and independent sectors, I see every day how nurses champion integrated working, strengthening partnerships to deliver joined up person-centred care, shaping services to ensure care is centred on what matters most to older people and their families. Promoting dignity, independence and quality of life are more than just words – they shape everyday care and are at the heart of everything we do.



Kirsty Cartin

Our care home nurses combine expert clinical assessment with strong interpersonal skills to champion independence, dignity, and quality of life—seeing each person beyond their needs to who they are and who they want to be. By focusing on wellbeing and truly understanding every individual, they proactively support health and help people live well at home.



SCOTLAND



Louise McKay

As a nurse, we have a unique opportunity with great privilege to make a difference for older people in our care. There are moments in our careers we should ask ourselves what difference do we want to make? I advocate for all nurses to honour the profession, be bold, be brave and be the difference to transform the care of older people.

Aurelia Peggy

In my role supporting adults with chronic medical conditions, I work as part of a volunteer team to promote health, wellbeing, independence and dignity.

I use a strength-based approach, encouraging participation in simple balance and strengthening exercises, seated exercises and adapted activities such as indoor seated curling and boccia. These sessions are designed not only to support physical ability, but also to build confidence, motivation, and social interaction. By making activities accessible and enjoyable, I help adults stay active, engaged and supported in maintaining their quality of life.



Claire Sturrock

On International Nurses' Day 2026, we celebrate those of us working with older people—championing independence, preserving dignity and enhancing quality of life. As an Advanced Nurse Practitioner within an acute surgical frailty team, I'm proud to stand with colleagues who ensure that every older person is seen, heard and supported to live well, every day.



SCOTLAND



Suzanne Smith

Within our Hospital at Home team, we empower older adults to express their wishes by understanding what truly matters to them and ensuring care decisions are shaped around these priorities. By taking time to genuinely listen, we support independence, uphold dignity and enable better quality of life—an approach our patients truly value.

Tracey Lister

In my work in frailty, I see every day how important it is for older people to feel heard and understood. As nurses, we play a vital role in supporting independence, preserving dignity and helping people live as well as possible.



Kirsty Lovie

I am passionate about promoting older adult care that honours independence, dignity and compassion. Nurses are an important part of the multidisciplinary team in empowering older people to live fulfilling lives, offering not only skilled care but respect, kindness and human connection at every stage.



WALES CYMRU



Wendy Mashlan

Nursing older people is undoubtedly an enormous privilege. Being able to provide person-centred dignified care to those who are highly resilient and hold the greatest life experiences, primarily focusing on years over life not life over years is the most amazing aspect of my role.

Viki Brice

The nurses within the Torfaen Clinical Assessment Team for Care Homes (CATCH) always place the resident's voice at the centre of their practice. With a values-based approach to healthcare, comprehensive clinical assessment and shared decision-making, we work collaboratively with care home staff and colleagues across primary care to ensure residents receive the right care, in the place of their choosing.

Viki (centre right)
and colleagues



WALES CYMRU



Lauren Jones

I am currently working as a senior lecturer in a university. I am a module leader for a post-registration frailty interprofessional module. I love promoting the care of older adults through a multi-professional approach to frailty teaching. I also love promoting dignified care of older adults to pre-registration nurses and older people's nursing as a profession.

Ruth Cann

Last year, as part of a project for the Bevan Commission, I interviewed nurses working in frailty clinical nurse specialist roles. One of my favourite reflections, and one that strongly reflects both the theme and my own values, came from a community frailty nurse, who said:

"As a nurse working with older people, I used to think my role was to keep people safe at all costs. As a community frailty nurse, working with older people living with frailty or multiple long-term conditions in their own homes, I now feel my role is to help people live as well as they can on their own terms."

This insight captures a shift from risk-focused care towards a strengths-based approach that prioritises independence, dignity and quality of life. A perspective that resonates deeply with my values.



NORTHERN IRELAND



Stacey Finlay - Northern
Ireland representative for
the BGS NAHPs Council

Working with older people is one of the most rewarding and varied areas of nursing. Alongside my role as Deputy Manager in an independent sector care home supporting older people living with dementia and mental health conditions, I am also an Honorary Lecturer specialising in Older People's Nursing at Queen's University Belfast, a member of the Editorial Advisory Board for Nursing Older People, Deputy Lead of the RCN Northern Ireland Independent Sector Network, and the Northern Ireland representative on the BGS Nurses and AHP Council.

For me, these roles demonstrate the incredible breadth that can come not only with a nursing career, but with a career specialising in older people's nursing. Across care homes, education, research, leadership and professional advocacy, every role has the same aim - empowering older people to maintain their independence, dignity and quality of life.

I am fortunate to be surrounded by incredible nurses who make this happen every day. Whether supporting someone to remain as independent as they can for as long as they can, advocating for their patient's wishes, providing compassionate care during difficult times, or helping people continue to live well, nurses working with older people play a vital role in empowering each person's journey.

NORTHERN IRELAND

Justin O'Neill

Our nurses are at the forefront of delivering person-centred, compassionate and dignified care to older people in our community. They strive to support individuals in making informed decisions to achieve their desired outcomes.



Justin (third from right) and colleagues

NORTHERN IRELAND



Maria Betts

As an Advanced Nurse Practitioner in District Nursing, I have the privilege of completing comprehensive geriatric assessments in the older person's own home. It is here that they have more autonomy in directing their own care, creating health promotion opportunities and treatment plans that matter most to them. It is the older person's voice that is central to providing holistic person-centred care in the community.

Cathy Shannon

In our Falls Prevention & Management Team at South Eastern HSC Trust, we empower all Trust staff to help identify and minimise risk of falls. Nursing staff are integral in how this translates to everyday practice; support the MDT in considering and reducing falls risk in all of the patient's activities of living.



Stephanie Craig

Working with older people is a privilege, and nurses play a vital role in promoting independence, dignity and quality of life. Through compassionate, person-centred care and strong teamwork, we can help ensure older people feel heard, valued and supported in the ways that matter most to them.





Thank you to all our contributors!
#InternationalNursesDay

