



Royal Star & Garter

Care with courage

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Charity staff celebrate milestone Nursing Associate qualifications

Royal Star & Garter's first cohort of student Nursing Associates has qualified.

Karen Jakeman, Fiona Mirembe and Leena Ghale finished their two-year course, and are now Registered Nursing Associates.

The three, who were working as Health Care Assistants (HCAs) and Lead HCAs at the Surbiton Home prior to the course, will now be able to take on responsibilities which previously lay with Nurses, such as taking blood samples, administering oral medications, and assisting with residents' care plans.



Registered Nursing Associates Fiona, Karen and Leena

Royal Star & Garter is a charity which provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

During the two-year course, Leena, Fiona and Karen continued working at the Surbiton Home, while also attending St George's, University of London, one day a week, and going on four-week placements in other care settings.

Royal Star & Garter met the associated costs after receiving funding from St George's NHS Foundation Trust. The course is endorsed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the charity viewed it as both an investment in its staff and recognition of their dedication and hard work.

St George's NHS Foundation Trust were able to transfer the cost of all three roles by releasing funds from their apprenticeship account.

During the final year of their course, studies switched online because of the pandemic, but the trio were still able to complete all their work placements.

The programme was commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) to bridge the gap between HCAs and Nurses.



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Fiona said the challenges posed by the pandemic added to the pressures of the course: "The last months tested my resilience but by then there was no chance of going back. I needed to finish what I started, and thank goodness I have."

Paying tribute to Royal Star & Garter and her colleagues, she added: "I would like to thank the charity for giving me this opportunity, and all the Nurses who have seen me through my journey."

Karen said: "The challenge for me was mastering the art of juggling my family, work, studying, placements and a worldwide pandemic thrown in! I cannot believe I have now made it to the finish line!"



Fiona, Leena and Karen outside St George's University of London, at the beginning of their course in 2019

Leena agreed: "After working full-time and being a full-time student, I feel like I've aged 10 years since I started the course instead of two. It was tough, but it was worth it."

Surbiton Home Manager Helena Maher said: "Leena, Karen and Fiona have studied hard to successfully achieve this qualification. It's wonderful for them, good news for the residents, and great for the Home to see the development of our team."

Director of Care Pauline Shaw said: "Juggling this demanding two-year course with a full-time job, family life and the unforeseen challenges of Covid-19 cannot have been easy. I'm delighted that our cohort has qualified, they are a credit to the charity."

Royal Star & Garter was one of only a handful of care homes to successfully put staff forward for the course. It has also played a critical part in the rollout of the pioneering course by providing placements to other student Nursing Associates since the pilot began in 2017.

Three staff members from Royal Star & Garter's High Wycombe Home began their student Nursing Associate courses in October 2020, after the charity teamed up with Buckinghamshire New University.



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Anyone interested in working for Royal Star & Garter should visit
www.starandgarter.org/work-for-us/

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About Royal Star & Garter

Our charity provides loving, compassionate care to veterans and their partners living with disability or dementia.

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Royal Star & Garter
is a member of the
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