

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

First cohort of trainee Nursing Associates from The Royal Star & Garter Homes go 'back to school'

Three staff members from The Royal Star & Garter Homes in Surbiton have become the first from the Charity to begin their trainee Nursing Associate course.

Health Care Assistants (HCAs) Leena Ghale, Karen Jakeman, and Fiona Mirembe started the two-year course in January.

The Charity is one of only a handful of care homes to successfully put staff forward for the course, and the three believe they are the only students in their class of around 70 not to come from a hospital or trust.



The Royal Star & Garter Homes has played a critical part in the roll-out of the pioneering course, commissioned by Health Education England (HEE) to bridge the gap between Healthcare Assistants and Nurses, by providing placements to Nursing Associate trainees since the pilot began in 2017.

During their studies Leena, Fiona and Karen will continue working at the Home in Surbiton, while also attending St George's, University of

London, one day a week, and go on three four-week placements in other care settings.

The Charity is meeting the costs of covering their roles during the course, as both an investment in its staff and recognition of their dedication and hard work.

After successfully completing their course, the trio will be able to take on some responsibilities which currently lie with nurses, allowing the team to work more efficiently. As qualified Nursing Associates they will be able to take blood samples, administer oral medications, and assist nurses with residents' care plans.



Lead HCA Karen works in specialist dementia care and has been with the Charity for two years. She said: *"This is a massive step in my career development, and I feel so proud. We give so much of ourselves emotionally and physically, so it's nice when that hard work is recognised. I cried when I found out I was on the course, I felt like a valued member of the team."*

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Leena, who has worked with the Charity for nearly four years and is also Lead HCA in specialist dementia care, said: *“The fact that we’ve been chosen motivates us to work even harder and to succeed.”*

Karen is looking forward to picking up new skills and ideas on her placements. She said: *“I’m sure I’ll see some really good practices which I’ll be able to bring back to the Charity, things that are small and simple that can be easily implemented and can make a big difference.”*



Fiona was a qualified nurse in South Africa and is looking forward to gaining credentials in this country. She said: *“It means everything to be on this course. When this opportunity turned up, I knew I had to give it my best try and thank God I made it. The Charity has been very supportive and deserves a big thank-you. I’m looking forward to sharing what I learn with everyone here in Surbiton.”*

Pauline Shaw, Director of Care at The Royal Star & Garter Homes, said: *“The Charity has been fully involved and supportive of this national initiative from the very beginning. We are immensely proud to put forward our staff as trainee Nursing Associates – very few care homes have been able to do this, and it acknowledges the excellent service we offer to residents. What our staff will learn during the two-year course will benefit them, the team they work in, and help us continue to provide award-winning care.”*

The next cohort from The Royal Star & Garter Homes will begin their trainee Nursing Associate course in September.

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About The Royal Star & Garter Homes:

The Charity provides award-winning care for veterans and their partners who live with disability or dementia.



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**The Royal Star
& Garter Homes**
Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a charity founded in 1916 to care for the severely injured young men returning from the battlegrounds of the First World War. Today we provide specialist care to the whole military family in our friendly, state-of-the-art Homes. Disabled ex-Servicemen and women, and their spouses, can all benefit from our pioneering approach to nursing, dementia and therapeutic care.

We are in the process of building new Homes around the country to provide specialist nursing care for disabled ex-Service people in the best modern surroundings, including dementia care facilities to address this growing need. The Charity has award-winning Homes in Solihull, West Midlands, and Surbiton, Surrey, which also enables the Charity to offer interim care for young disabled Service personnel. Following the successes of the first two Homes, a third Home in High Wycombe, Buckinghamshire, is being built, with a planned opening in 2019.

We are proud to have enjoyed Royal patronage since our foundation, including that of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II from 1953 to the present day.

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The Royal Star & Garter Homes is a member of the National Care Forum – the leading voice for not-for-profit care providers. A national perspective may be available from info@nationalcareforum.org.uk or by contacting 02476243619. More details on NCF available

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