

Date: 31.12.15

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## Media Release

### New Year's honour for 'inspiring' RUH palliative care nurse

Helen Meehan, a Lead Nurse in Palliative Care at the Royal United Hospitals Bath, has been awarded a British Empire Medal in the Queen's New Year's Honours for her work supporting patients, and their families, at the end of their lives.

Helen, a former lead nurse in Solihull, was nominated for the honour by Vanessa Wort, head nurse at Solihull Hospital and Community Services and Solihull Clinical Commissioning Group, in recognition of her 'significant' and 'lasting' impact on end of life care in the borough.

While at Heart of England NHS Foundation Trust, which runs Solihull Hospital and Community Services, as clinical lead for end of life care she led on a variety of projects, including the development of the 'My Life' initiative to support patients and their families in thinking about and sharing their wishes for future care. She now works in a similar role at the RUH in Bath, as lead nurse for palliative and end of life care.

Helen has been in nursing for 32 years, taking inspiration from her mother, who was also a nurse. Helen says: "I feel so very honoured and humbled to be receiving this award. I always wanted to be a nurse and never thought of doing anything else but I really did not expect this, so it was such an amazing surprise to receive the official letter in December."

Helen who has worked in palliative care for over 20 years continues: "I have always felt that supporting patients nearing the end of life and their families enables you to truly use all your skills as a nurse. To care for the dying person and their family is such a privilege. As a lead nurse I feel passionately about enabling all staff to do the best that they can do, to care with compassion and to enable the patient and their family to be supported with dignity and respect."

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Helen Blanchard, Director of Nursing at the RUH says: “We are delighted that Helen has been given this well-deserved honour, which acknowledges the significant impact she had during her time with the Heart of England Trust. I know Helen brings the same immense dedication and commitment to her role here in Bath, providing leadership for a team who are passionate about providing the best possible care to patients and their families.”

Helen Meehan adds: “I feel very privileged to have worked with so many amazing people and teams in my nursing career, many that have been willing to try new ways of working with me, to strive to be the best that they can be, to support some of our most vulnerable patients and families. I feel so very proud to be flying the flag for nursing. Solihull and the Trust will always hold a special place in my heart but I very much hope that my role at the RUH will continue to bring challenges and fulfilment in supporting others to do the best that they can do. I’m working with some truly inspirational staff.”

**ENDS**

**Notes to the editor:**

**IMAGE ATTACHED: HELEN MEEHAN, LEAD NURSE IN PALLIATIVE CARE, RUH**

- Helen Meehan qualified as a nurse in January 1987 and had her first staff nurse post on an oncology ward at Queen Elizabeth Hospital. She then started her midwifery training in 1988 at Solihull Hospital School of Midwifery and qualified as a midwife in 1990 before moving into palliative care.
- Helen Meehan joined the RUH in September 2014.