

# Sharing best practice with nurses from across the globe

*Health visitor and Queen's Nurse Pamela Shaw was invited to give a presentation on health visiting at a health conference in Trinidad and Tobago in June 2015. The event offered a chance to share best practice and learn about nursing in other countries.*

**T**rinidad and Tobago Registered Nurses Association (TTRNA) celebrated its seventh Quadrennial Health Conference on 1–6 June in Port of Spain, capital of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago. The conference's theme was Power and Best Practice in the 21st Century.

I had received an invitation to attend the conference and give a presentation on the topic of: 'Health Visiting: Making a difference within diverse populations and prevailing incidents of non-communicable diseases'. This came about as a direct result of my presentation on inclusive leadership at the Commonwealth Nurses Conference in March 2014, at which the TTRNA conference director, Mrs Rawlins, was present. She approached me and invited me to present, as a Queen's Nurse, at the 2015 Health Conference in Trinidad and Tobago.

As the conference approached, I was asked to submit an abstract, bibliography and PowerPoint presentation. My flight and hotel accommodation were taken care of by TTRNA, which was a privilege. This practice is not commonplace with conferences overseas; normally presenters are required to self-fund the cost of attending a conference.

## **Pamela Shaw**

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## **The conference**

The conference was attended by nurses from different disciplines and levels across the nursing profession, including education and management. Many were from Trinidad and islands across the Caribbean, while others had travelled from the UK, the US and Australia. All attendees were passionate about the nursing profession and keen to learn from each other, network and share best practice.

I discovered that there were more similarities than differences between the practices of UK nurses and those from across the globe, including Trinidad. All of the nurses were committed to providing good-quality care in often challenging situations, and the importance of evidence-based practice is held dear to enable nurses to challenge practice and make positive changes to affect patient/client outcomes and satisfaction.

My presentation on health visiting struck a chord with many health visitors in Trinidad and Tobago, especially the section on the four principles of health visiting (Council



*Pamela giving her presentation at the event*

for the Education and Training of Health Visitors, 1977) and how health visitors can utilise these principles to be a powerful voice for client advocacy.

The conference highlighted that nurses need to do more than simply care for patients and undertake research. They must have an active role in shaping health policy, and be able to advocate for the profession by coming together to promote a coordinated, strong leadership. Attendees at the conference agreed that they all had a part to play in advocating for patients/clients and health services, and using a range of innovative ideas to improve the profession and the lives of those whom we serve. This fits nicely with

the overall theme of the conference—power and best practice—and the importance of nurses coming together from across the globe to share good practice, network and learn from one another.

### My presentation

My talk included a brief history of health visiting in the UK, its underlying principles and the recent changes to health visiting service provision. I also highlighted the models used to identify families at risk and explained that, through a process of progressive universalism, we ensure that all families receive a universal health visiting service, based on the 456 model (Figure 1).

I discussed the *Health Visitor Implementation Plan* (Department of Health, 2011), its extension of the health visiting workforce in England and how the input of practice educators and mentors enabled this process to be possible. The implementation plan allowed for the development of leadership skills, and was facilitated by a willingness on the part of staff to have a clear role in making its aims a reality. Health visiting staff across the country were called on to update systems and processes to modernise data collection and records, thus moving health visiting into the 21st century. In my presentation, I shared some of the challenges of this process—and, most importantly, how these were overcome.

I stressed the importance of health visitors globally showing leadership by embracing diversity to provide culturally sensitive care, particularly as a number of world health issues—namely non-communicable diseases—are increasingly common due to changing demographics and other factors in society.

The minister for health in Trinidad and Tobago, The Honourable Dr Fuad Khan, attended the conference, which offered the opportunity for nurses to engage with the government's ideas regarding future health-care policy direction. It also gave nurses a chance to hold the government to

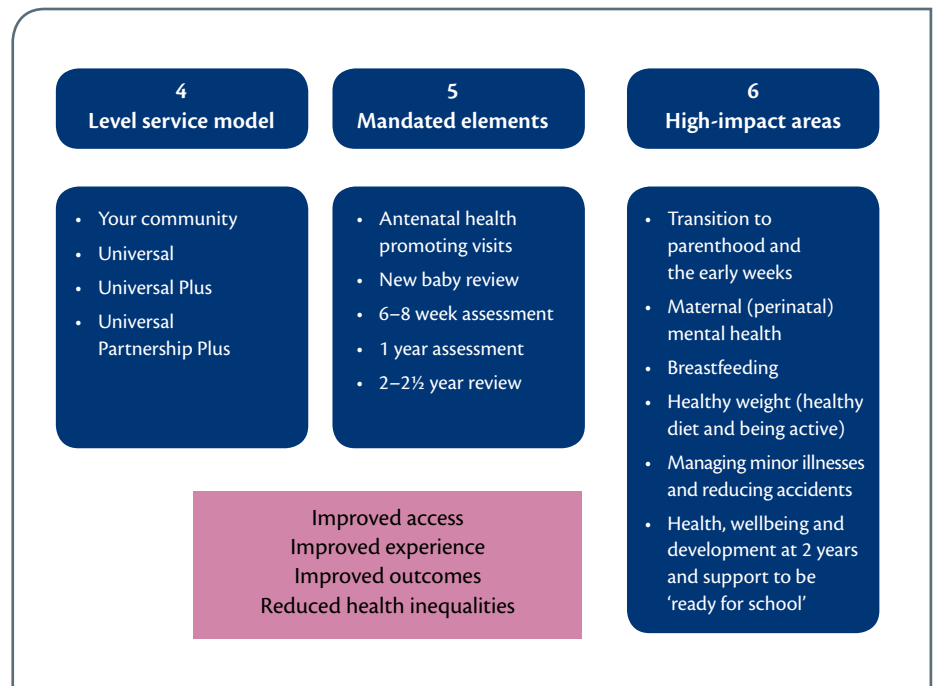


Figure 1. The Department of Health's '456 model' of the health visiting service in England



Pamela met the President of the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago, His Excellency Anthony Carmona, and his wife at a cocktail reception they hosted in honour of nurses

account and provide information on nursing practice, opportunities and challenges, along with details about how nurses in other parts of the world have supported governments to find solutions to problems.

The presenters and conference organisers received personal invitations to attend two evening cocktail receptions—one hosted by His Excellency Anthony Carmona, President of the Republic of Trinidad

and Tobago, and Mrs Carmona; and the second hosted by The Honourable Dr Khan. Both events were an opportunity to network and find out more about nursing in Trinidad and Tobago, while recognising and celebrating the contribution that nurses make to the health service.

### Learning experience

Having returned from an exceptional conference in Trinidad and Tobago,

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at which I participated in sharing best practice and nursing leadership, I have had time to reflect on how the conference has helped to broaden my thinking on nursing across the globe:

- ♦ I am now more appreciative of the need for nursing leaders to develop strategies to support nurses from a wide range of cultures and backgrounds who emigrate to work in other countries
- ♦ I have developed an understanding that nurses are embracing the value of their clinical leadership role to empower one another to become more productive in their role

- ♦ I have come to realise that leadership must adopt a style that flows in all directions, from the bedside to the boardroom, and enables nurses to influence practice at all levels.

The conference highlighted that nurses in Trinidad and Tobago, and across the world, are keen to develop the profession and advance nursing practice through education, mentorship, preceptorship and regulation. It was evident that some countries were ahead of this progress, while others were looking at ways to put structures in place to facilitate

such development. I was able to share tools that I have developed to support student health visitors in practice and after qualification. The conference provided an opportunity to share ideas through networking and coaching. I believe that all nurses should do their part to share best practice with their peers and colleagues, both locally and nationally.

I was given the opportunity to share my ideas and learn from the experiences of nurses from all over the world. I look forward to further opportunities to participate in similar events in the future, both in the UK and abroad. I would encourage other health visitors to seize any such opportunities, if offered, and influence practice with nurses globally. **JHV**

Council for the Education and Training of Health Visitors (1977) *An investigation into the principles of health visiting*. CETHV, London  
Department of Health (2011) *Health Visitor Implementation Plan 2011–15: A call to action*. DH, London

# Journal of Health Visiting Study Days 2015

JHV invites you to attend our final free study day of 2015, designed to offer a concentrated educational update for health visitors.

Taking place at **The Castlefield Rooms, Manchester**, on **1st October**, the event will focus on skin care and common allergies.

To fit around your working day, the event runs from **6pm to 9.30pm**. It will include a buffet meal, refreshments and CPD certificate.

The study day is free to attend, but places are strictly limited to 150, so please book early to avoid disappointment.

#### **For further information:**

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