



Professor Joanne Atkinson being presented with her Fellowship by Professor John Unsworth OBE at the QICN annual awards ceremony.

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National Fellowship honours Northumbria nursing leader

A leading academic in palliative and end-of-life care at Northumbria University has been recognised for her exceptional contributions to community nursing and patient care.

[Professor Joanne Atkinson](#) has been awarded one of the most prestigious accolades in community nursing, recognising her outstanding leadership and four decades of dedication to advancing palliative and end-of-life care across

the UK.

Pro Vice-Chancellor for the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Northumbria University, Professor Atkinson, was awarded the [Fellowship of the Queen's Institute of Community Nursing](#) (QICN) at the organisation's annual awards ceremony at the Millennium Gloucester Hotel in London. The Fellowship recognises distinguished leaders who have made exceptional contributions to the healthcare system.

Professor Atkinson was among just seven healthcare professionals nationwide to receive this honour, joining an exclusive group of Fellows who have transformed community nursing practice and education.

With over 40 years of experience working as a registered nurse and as a Macmillan Clinical Nurse Specialist, Professor Atkinson has extensive expertise in oncology and palliative care. Her background has informed her pioneering research spanning cancer care, long-term conditions, and care homes.

She has helped shape national healthcare standards through her work with NHS England and the QICN, developing curricula that ensure the next generation of nurses are equipped with cutting-edge skills and knowledge. Through her engagement with the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Hospice and Palliative Care and evidence submitted to the House of Lords Committee on Integration of Primary and Community Care, she has helped inform crucial policy decisions affecting end-of-life care provision across the country.

In a remarkable demonstration of her commitment to patient wellbeing, Professor Atkinson developed the charity [My New Hair](#) with the late hairdressing icon Trevor Sorbie MBE. What began as a small initiative has grown into an international charity providing vital support, education and advocacy for people experiencing medical hair loss. She continues to serve as a trustee for the organisation, alongside her role as Governor of [Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#).

Professor Atkinson was presented with her Fellowship by [Professor John Unsworth OBE](#), QICN Chair and Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor (Education) for the Faculty of Health and Wellbeing at Northumbria University. Commenting on this, Professor Atkinson said: "I am truly privileged and delighted to receive this Fellowship from the Queen's Nursing Institute of Community

Nursing. The QICN is at the heart of community, and to be recognised alongside such distinguished colleagues is deeply humbling. I am passionate about ensuring that patients receive compassionate, high-quality care in their own homes and communities, particularly at the end of life.

“This honour reflects not only my own work but the dedication of the countless nurses, colleagues, and patients who have shaped my practice over four decades. I hope to continue contributing to the advancement of palliative and end-of-life care in the community, ensuring that future generations of nurses are equipped to meet the evolving needs of the communities they serve.

Speaking about the awards ceremony, Steph Lawrence MBE, Chief Executive of the QICN, said: “To every Queen's Nurse, Fellow, and Awardee: you are the heart of healthcare. Your dedication to the people you serve, to innovation, and leadership transforms lives in the community every single day. Let this celebration fuel your ambition to lead the future of nursing and continue to deliver outstanding care.”

Find out more about [the School of Healthcare and Nursing Sciences](#) at Northumbria University.

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Contacts



Andrea Slowey

Press Contact

Head of Corporate Communications (interim)

andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk

07708 509436



Rachael Barwick

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk

07377422415



James Fox

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk



Kelly Elliott

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk



Ruth Logonne

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

ruth.logonne@northumbria.ac.uk

07923 382339



Gemma Brown

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk