



Isabel Quinn and Kevin Murphy, Assistant Professors in Adult Nursing, Dr Claire Pryor, Assistant Professor in Adult Nursing and Pathway Lead for SPQ Adult Nursing and Leanne Hume, Northern Region Lead Nurse Independent Health and Social Care, RCN

May 16, 2024 13:22 BST

## **Northumbria launches UK's first new specialist practice qualification in adult social care**

Northumbria University has become the first higher education provider in the UK to have a new Specialist Practice Qualification (SPQ) in Community Nursing adult social care approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) to support more nurses into community nursing.

The qualification will be available to registered nurses working in, or working

closely with teams and patients in, a social care setting such as residential and nursing care homes, care at home, and hospices.

The programme has been flexibly designed to ensure that it is accessible to as many nurses as possible and can support them developing their skills and careers in this vital area of nursing.

Speaking on the new programme Professor Alison Machin, Head of Department, Nursing, Midwifery and Health at Northumbria University said: “Adult social care nurses are often responsible for providing care for people with multi-morbidities, chronic conditions, and are responsible for looking after for people with some of the most complex clinical, emotional and care needs. This new course goes a long way to recognising and raising the profile of the level of skill required to fulfil the role.”

She added: “With an ageing population, the role of adult social care nurses is only going to grow as we strive to meet the goals set out by the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England and the integrated care boards.

“By giving these nurses opportunities for more structured career progression, we should be able to better attract and retain staff into this specialist area.”

The course will be provided as an apprenticeship route or direct entry to registered nurses on both a full-time (one year) or part-time (two years) basis to provide flexibility for those working within the sector to complete their studies around their other commitments.

Offering students a combination for practical learning in an appropriate place of work – usually their employer – and classroom education delivered by highly trained clinicians and practice experts, the course is designed to enhance student learning and provide opportunities to develop their networks and industry relationships.

Discussing the value of SPQ programmes within this area Leanne Hume, Northern Region Lead Nurse Independent Health and Social Care, Royal College of Nursing said: “The launch of Northumbria University's Specialist Practitioner Qualification (SPQ) in adult social care gives recognition to the unique demands and complexities of this vital nursing field.

“By offering tailored education and career progression opportunities, it elevates the skills and profile of adult social care nurses whilst addressing the growing needs of our population.

“This initiative closely aligns with the Royal College of Nursing's vision for nursing by championing specialised training, increasing career progression opportunities, fostering retention, and ensuring patients have access to safe and effective nurse staffing.”

Northumbria University is dedicated to delivering high quality learning and development opportunities through experiential teaching using simulation-based education and innovative virtual reality technology to enhance practical learning, as well as providing first-class pastoral support for students.

Professor Deborah Sturdy Chief Nurse Adult Social Care at the Department of Health and Social Care said, “I am delighted to see the first course for social care nurses approved and recognition of a specialist practice.

“This is a significant step forward for the specialism and for the first time creates a platform for sector nurses to develop their practice. I hope that Northumbria’s success in developing this programme will act as a catalyst for others”.

Northumbria University is one of the largest centres for healthcare professional education in the North of England, offering a range of [specialist degree and CPD programmes](#) across many areas of nursing, midwifery, social care, operating department practice, physiotherapy and occupational therapy.

Northumbria University is dedicated to reducing health and social inequalities, contributing to the regional and national workforce and improving social, economic and health outcomes for the most marginalised in society. Through its new [Centre for Health and Social Equity](#), known as CHASE, researchers will be delivering world-leading health and social equity research and creating innovative, evidence-based policies and data-driven solutions to bring impactful change across the region, the UK and globally.

[Click here](#) for more information on about the new SPQ in adult social care.

---

## UNIVERSITY OF THE YEAR 2022 (Times Higher Education Awards)

Northumbria is a research-intensive university that unlocks potential for all, changing lives regionally, nationally and internationally.

Two thirds of Northumbria's undergraduate students come from the North East region and go into employment in the region when they graduate, demonstrating Northumbria's significant contribution to social mobility and levelling up in the North East of England.

Find out more about us at [www.northumbria.ac.uk](http://www.northumbria.ac.uk)

--- Please contact [media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:media.communications@northumbria.ac.uk) with any media enquiries or interview requests ---

### Contacts



**Rik Kendall**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Business and Law / Arts, Design & Social Sciences

[rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rik.kendall@northumbria.ac.uk)

07923 382339



**Andrea Slowey**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

Engineering and Environment / Health and Life Sciences

[andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:andrea.slowey@northumbria.ac.uk)

07708 509436



**Rachael Barwick**

Press Contact

PR and Media Manager

[rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:rachael.barwick@northumbria.ac.uk)

07377422415



**James Fox**

Press Contact

Student Communications Manager

[james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:james2.fox@northumbria.ac.uk)

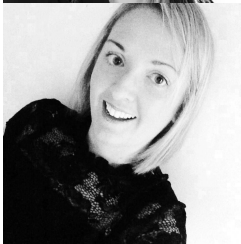


**Kelly Elliott**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:kelly2.elliott@northumbria.ac.uk)



**Gemma Brown**

Press Contact

PR and Media Officer

[gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk](mailto:gemma6.brown@northumbria.ac.uk)