

Please cite the Published Version

Wilson, N (2018) Challenging the status quo and shaping the future. *British Journal of Community Nursing*, 23 (S7). S5. ISSN 1462-4753

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjcn.2018.23.Sup7.S5>

Publisher: Mark Allen Healthcare

Version: Accepted Version

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Challenging the status quo and shaping the future

The National Nurses Nutrition Group (NNNG) was established in 1986 by a group of nurses, who worked in the specialist area of artificial nutrition. The group, which has a committee of nurses elected to act as trustees, work with an ethos to 'promote education in nutrition and related subjects for members of the nursing profession, for the public benefit, and especially for the benefit of patients in the hospital and community'. The NNNG, now in its thirty-second year, has helped to raise the profile of the nursing voice in specialist nutritional care. In 2005, one of its members challenged the direction of the group and raised this with the committee of Trustees. A ward sister in stroke care believed that the NNNG could formally recognise oral nutrition and integrate this area into its specialist work, alongside artificial nutritional support. Liz Anderson, nutrition nurse specialist at Buckinghamshire Healthcare NHS Trust, wanted to promote the importance of oral nutrition in the recovery of patients and believed the group had a fundamental role and responsibility to respond to this area of clinical practice. Liz became recognised within the group for her passion and drive for oral nutrition and this resulted in her appointment as chair of the NNNG in 2010. Over the past 8 years, Liz has led a team of committee members to oversee the fundamental reshaping of the group, with the relaunch of a new website, membership facilities and a dedicated safe space for nurses to discuss and share experiences with one another. Since being Chair, Liz has led a team to develop five new sets of guidelines relating to key aspects of patient care and made sure that these are free to download from the group. She has also overseen the re-launch of the group's conferences to nurses, with a revitalised educational experience. Her work with the Department of Health, NHS Improvement, British Association for Parenteral and Enteral Nutrition (BAPEN), Royal College of Physicians, Royal College of Nursing, Hospital Catering Association and Hospital Food Panel, as well as the building of closer ties to patient groups has been welcomed. Liz leads nutrition nursing for her Trust, which she has successfully balanced with her work at a national level, and she has been fully supported by her Trust with so many attendances and contributions made at key national events. Liz is stepping down from her role as chair of the NNNG in December 2018, and will move to represent nurses on the executive team of BAPEN. There is no doubt that through challenging the group 13 years ago, Liz has made a significant contribution to nutrition nursing and is a role model for other nurses who want to challenge, break down barriers and improve patient care.