



# Third annual QuDoS recognition programme marks MS excellence

**Amanda Barrell, Lemonade Studio**

Healthcare professionals dedicated to making the lives of their patients better have been celebrated.

The third annual [Quality in the Delivery of Services \(QuDoS\) in MS recognition programme](#) was held at Jurys Inn Hinckley Island ahead of this year's [MS Trust conference](#).

The scheme – a partnership between the charity and [Pharmaphorum](#) – celebrates best practice and innovation across the sector.

Pam Macfarlane, chief executive at the MS Trust, said:

*“People with MS rely on their specialist teams so much. It’s wonderful to see them recognised for all the work they do. So many of them go the extra mile.”*

Among the categories were outstanding MS nurse, outstanding MS allied health professional, outstanding MS pharmacist, outstanding MS physician and outstanding MS team.

Neurologist Dr Trevor Pickersgill, who compered the evening, said the quality of entries had been “exceedingly high”, and had showcased the hard work and innovative thinking of MS teams across the UK.

His fellow judge, patient advocate Trishna Bharadia, said:

*“Being on the judging panel... filled me with optimism, knowing there are so many great initiatives out there to improve services for people with MS.”*

Categories also included Innovation in Care and Access to Patient Information, and two special judges’ awards were also presented.

Congratulating the winners, Pharmaphorum’s CEO, Paul Tunnah, said the entries had been “inspirational” adding that everyone who had been shortlisted or nominated should be “extremely proud”.

*“It’s humbling to see all the work that takes place to help people with MS and their families to live better lives,”*

he added.

## **WINNERS:**

- Outstanding MS specialist nurse
- Outstanding allied health professional
- Outstanding physician
- Outstanding pharmacist
- Team of the year
- Innovation in care



- Access to patient information in care
- Judges' special award

**Outstanding specialist nurse:**

Sarah White, St George's Hospital, London.

Sarah, who has developed annual patient information days, was described as the “lynchpin” of St George’s MS services.

Her team said she had been instrumental in improving access to phlebotomy for DMD monitoring, and manages a significant patient caseload, as well as her managerial role.

*“Sarah demonstrates complete commitment to the values of nursing, treating patients and carers with compassion and sensitivity,”*

said the judges.

She described the award as a “great honour” adding that there were “very many MS nurses out there doing equally as good a job as me”.

*“Nurses are doing great things in the face of challenging circumstances. I could not do my job without the team I work with.”*

Commended:

- Gosia Kuran, King’s College, London
- Rachel Morrison, Western Isles

**Outstanding allied health professional:**

Tania Burge, MS specialist physiotherapist, North Bristol NHS Trust

A true team player, Tania has recruited, developed and trained a team of ten instructors with a special interest in MS at a local leisure centre.

This has allowed her team to offer services and activities to improve the quality of life of people with MS, including swimming, running and mountain climbing.

*“It’s just amazing to have won this award. There’s so much that goes on during the year and it’s great to have this event.*

*“It’s a lot of work, but it’s really worth it,” she said, “we make a difference to people’s lives. There is so much we can do to improve quality of life.”*

The judges said Tania using her leadership ability to forge new services “within an NHS in austerity shows great innovation and dedication”.

Commended:

- Jody Barber, senior neurological physiotherapist, Hertfordshire Neurological Service
- Gillian Burdon, MS occupational therapist, Wye Valley NHS Trust



**Outstanding physician:**

*Dr Adnan Al-Araji, consultant neurologist, director and lead, Royal Stoke MS Centre.*

Excellent leadership skills have enabled Dr Al-Araji, a “genuine team player”, to develop and improve MS services in Stoke.

A passion for clinical work and strong relationships with nurses, imaging and medical departments have led to a team that work together seamlessly to support people with MS.

“Thank you to the MS Trust and QuDos committee for recognising the work we are doing,” he said, adding his “fantastic team” lived by the adage “excellence is not accidental”.

He added that he was happy, honoured and very proud of his team.

*“Dr Al-Araji endeavours to be available to support MS nurse colleagues and other members of the team,”*

said the judges.

Dr Al-Araji was unable to attend the event and his award was collected on his behalf by MS specialist nurse at the Royal Stoke, Nikki Embrey.

Commended: Dr Timothy Harrower, consultant neurologist and senior clinical lecturer, North Devon District Hospital.

**Outstanding pharmacist:**

*Aoife Shields, principle pharmacist, MS, University College London Hospitals NHS Trust.*

Aoife has developed rigorous screening protocols and monitoring guidelines for all DMDs, requiring significant changes in MS and pharmacy services.

A “no bloods, no drugs” policy, a pathway for unwell patients that sees them reviewed four times a week and new homecare services can all be credited to Aoife’s work.

She said: *“It’s wonderful for pharmacy to be recognised for our contribution to supporting people with MS. Pharmacy can really add value to the safety and governance of providing new drugs.”*

She added that the award was testament to her whole team.

*“Aoife is very patient focused and always goes out of her way to ensure that her patients receive the very best possible care,”*

said the judges.

Commended:

- Ben Dorward, lead neurosciences pharmacist, Sheffield Teaching Hospital
- Lesley Murray, advanced pharmacist for neurosciences, Queen Elizabeth Hospital

**Team of the year:**



Dorset Multiple Sclerosis Service, Poole Hospital NHS Trust

Every one of the Dorset team either is, or is on their way to being, an advanced practitioner in MS, and they care for people from diagnosis to end of life.

The team, which has a caseload of more than 1,200, consists of nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists, a DMD coordinator, an administrator and two MS neurologists.

Michelle Davies, team lead and specialist MS practitioner, said:

*“Because we care for everyone, we don’t have that imbalance of services. We are working to educate everyone to practitioner level to eliminate any fragmentation of care.*

*“It’s a more efficient use of resources and it means anyone who sees any one of us will have access to expertise and knowledge across MS.”*

She added that the team had been delighted just to have been shortlisted, and had never expected to win.

*“This investment in face-to-face training has been vital in establishing strong networks throughout Dorset with a positive and long-lasting effect on patient care,”*

said the judges.

Commended:

- MS Specialist Rehabilitation Team, Birmingham
- Community Neurology Service, West Norfolk

**Innovation in care:**

MS Buddy Scheme, Wessex MS Therapy Centre

Innovation with a human touch: the MS Buddy Scheme is designed to tackle loneliness and isolation among people with MS.

Volunteer coordinator Carol Coates established a bank of MS buddies to visit people in their own homes, working tirelessly to find suitable volunteers as well as get all the necessary policies and procedures in place.

Rosie Eliot, director of the Wessex MS Therapy Centre, thanked the MS Trust and the QuDoS panel.

*“We are very proud of all the hard work the staff at the therapy centre put in on a daily basis to help people with MS live a quality life.”*

She added that the team were “delighted to have won an award”.

*“For many of these people stuck in their own homes, a buddy acts as a lifeline to the outside world,”*

said the judges.



Commended:



- Barts MS team, Digesting Science programme
- Community MS Specialist Nurse Team, Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust

### **Access to patient information in care**

#### Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust

The Frimley Health MS team have developed [Treatment Agreements](#) to help people with MS take responsibility for their care and feel more involved in decision making.

The drug-specific one-page document outlines the benefits, risk and responsibilities of treatment and is given to patients embarking on a DMD. It is fully explained by an MS nurse.

Dr Matt Craner, consultant neurologist at Frimley Park, said the team were “absolutely delighted” with the award.

*“We are a really strong team and that is what enables us to look at different ways of working, different ways we can improve the lives of people with MS and their families,”*

he said.

The judges said the treatment agreements reinforced the importance of blood monitoring and allowed for a “trusted collaborative partnership with the patient”.

Commended: MS Team, Queen Elizabeth Hospital, Birmingham.

### **Judges’ special award:**

#### Neurological Examination Nurse Training Course, Salford Royal NHS Foundation Trust.

More than 200 nurses working with people with MS have attended the two-day course, which has been running since 2012. It was developed by Salford’s team of neurological consultants and MS nurses.

It trains nurses to assess patients’ sensory and motor responses, improves their ability to identify warning signals and leads to better care and treatment.

Karen Vernon, MS nurse consultant, said: *“I am extremely proud that we have won this award on behalf of all the team at Salford who have helped develop the programme to what it is today.*

*“It’s a pleasure to be able to help nurses develop and we have to thank all the patients who give their time willingly.”*

### **Judges’ special award**

#### NHS Western Isles MS Service

Technology has been utilised to allow patients in this large, rural, remote area to get access the care they need, when they need it, despite being so far from physical services.



Numerous initiatives, such as [Jabber Virtual Clinics](#), a texting service that sends reminders of upcoming blood tests, and Attend Anywhere virtual drop in clinics, have been instated.

MS nurse Rachel Morrison said: *"I am so delighted, for me and for the whole team. But it's not about us, it's about the patients: if you listen to them, they will give you all the answers you need."*

The judges said the use of technology, tailored to fit each patient, had been instrumental in empowering them to self-manage.