



Chris Pointon meeting first year students David Simpson and Alicja Kleysa

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## University funds new personalised uniforms to help student nurses on placement

North East patients receiving care from Northumbria University's student nurses can now easily see the name of their carer, after the University paid to have names embroidered onto student uniforms.

Northumbria is believed to be the first university in the country to pay for the names of all first-year nursing and healthcare students to be embroidered onto their uniforms.

The change came after a pilot study inspired by the [#hellomynameis](#) campaign found a real benefit to names being clearly visible on uniforms for both students and patients.

*#hellomynameis* was launched in 2013 by Dr Kate Granger and her husband Chris Pointon. Kate was terminally ill and became frustrated that many staff looking after her did not introduce themselves before delivering her care. They created the campaign which uses a smiling face logo to remind healthcare staff about the importance of introducing themselves to their patients.

In a bid to improve the experiences of students whilst on placement, researchers in the University's [Department of Nursing, Midwifery and Health](#) undertook a pilot study to see if having names embroidered on uniforms would be of benefit.

Practice-based placements are an integral part of healthcare related programmes and students rotate between different organisations, wards and clinical teams throughout the course of their degree. However, they are not always given name badges from their placement provider, meaning they aren't always easily identifiable to co-workers and patients.

Name badges with magnets can interfere with electronic devices; lanyards can pose an issue if patients try to snatch them and infection control requirements need to be considered too.

As part of the study, the names of more than 50 students across a range of healthcare disciplines were embroidered onto their uniforms, together with the 'smiling' *#hellomynameis* logo.

The study found that having names visible on uniforms helped students to integrate within their teams. Students said that it aided them in delivering compassionate care to patients who didn't need to worry about remembering their carer's name. Students also reported that it brought benefits for patient safety, particularly in emergency situations when they could be clearly identified and given instructions.

The success of the pilot programme has led to the University investing in personally embroidered uniforms for all first-year students on nursing,

midwifery and healthcare programmes. There is an aim to roll it out to all health professional students in future.

Senior Lecturer in Nursing, [Dr Julie Derbyshire](#), explained: “We found that when students had their names embroidered onto their uniforms it helped them to make personal connections and build relationships with vulnerable people and co-workers. We believe this simple, yet powerful, initiative can make a meaningful difference to compassionate, collaborative and safe care and can empower and enable both staff and patients.”

Chris Pointon visited Northumbria University to meet with the first cohort of students to wear the new uniforms and also visited Newcastle’s Royal Victoria Infirmary where he met with students and staff working in the birthing centre and paediatric wards.

“I was really appreciative of the University’s suggestion to embroider student names onto their tunics,” he said. “It was a really proud moment when I first saw them and I know Kate would have been proud too.

“Seeing the friendly smile on the logo and the individuals name is the first part of interaction that some patients might have with healthcare staff and puts them at ease when they are in hospital. Patients and staff alike really get behind it.”

Helga Charters, Associate Director of Nursing for Children and Young People at [Newcastle Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust](#) gave Chris a tour of the Royal Victoria Infirmary to see the impact of students wearing the new uniforms on the wards, saying that the uniforms were a great way to support the *#hellomynameis* initiative.

“The students I have spoken to have commented on how proud they are of their uniforms and the message it sends from a very early stage in their training,” she said.

“Having their name embroidered on their uniform under “Hello my name is” really reinforces the message of the importance for all staff to introduce themselves to patients and their families whatever their discipline or role.”

[Sasha Ban](#), Deputy Head of Northumbria’s Department of [Nursing, Midwifery](#)

[and Health](#), added: “We are keen to develop the campaign by working collaboratively with our NHS Trust partners and other stakeholders. Whilst many Trusts have implemented the campaign and introduced name badges, we are unaware of any university who have developed this campaign further with the use of embroidered logo and names on tunics for students across all health care programmes. We believe we may be the first to do so.”

Northumbria is one of the [top-rated universities for healthcare programmes](#) in the UK, offering courses in Adult, Child, Mental Health and Learning Disabilities Nursing, Midwifery, Operating Department Practice, Physiotherapy and Occupational Therapy.

In partnership with Newcastle Hospitals, the University recently opened a new national [OSCE testing centre](#). Up to 7,000 new nurses and midwives per year will complete their training at Northumbria as part of their Test of Competence before they can be registered to practice.

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