



Celebrating 75 Years of the NHS: Past, Present and Future

An Interview with Catherine Bilbrough, Matron and BSG Nursing Association Committee Member, on the significance of the milestone celebrating 75 years of the NHS.

Introduction

The National Health Service (NHS) in the United Kingdom has reached a remarkable milestone of 75 years since its establishment. In celebration of this occasion, JAG has sat down with Catherine Bilbrough, to discuss her experiences as part of the healthcare system and the notable changes she has witnessed throughout her career. We delve into the significance of the NHS, the improvements in patient care and nursing practices, advancements in medical equipment, and the impact of cultural diversity on quality care delivery.

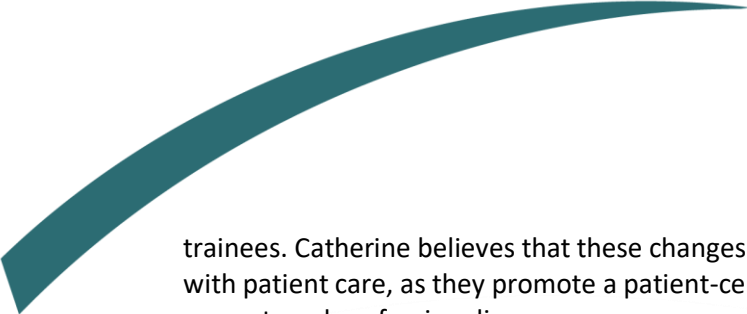
A Milestone Worth Celebrating

Catherine Bilbrough, who initially trained in Australia, acknowledged the importance of the NHS and its contribution to the healthcare landscape. She highlighted that the provision of free healthcare at the point of service is a significant achievement that sets the NHS apart from many other countries. Despite financial constraints, the NHS continues to offer a high standard of care consistently. Catherine emphasised the value of celebrating this milestone and maintaining the accessibility and affordability of healthcare.

"A consistent service - benchmarked so that we know that we're offering really good standard of care consistently."

Evolving Patient Care and Nursing Practices

Catherine reflected on the changes she has observed in patient care and nursing practices over the years. She mentioned that there has been a continuous review and improvement of standards, training, and professional behaviour. The focus has shifted from merely filling nursing positions to ensuring the right attitudes and behaviours are instilled in nursing



trainees. Catherine believes that these changes in training have had a positive correlation with patient care, as they promote a patient-centred approach and encourage empathy, respect, and professionalism.

“We couldn't see what was going on, so we couldn't anticipate, and we couldn't assist”

Advancements in Medical Equipment

As an endoscopy nurse, Catherine shared her insights into the advancements in medical equipment, particularly in endoscopy procedures. She recalls how the introduction of camera technology transformed the field, allowing for better visualisation and collaboration among healthcare professionals. High-definition screens, video chips, and imaging techniques like narrowband imaging have revolutionised the quality of visual information available during procedures. These advancements have not only improved diagnostic accuracy but have also enabled therapeutic interventions, reducing the need for invasive surgeries.

Embracing Cultural Diversity for Quality Care

Catherine acknowledged the ongoing cultural shift within the NHS and emphasised the importance of equality, diversity, and inclusion. The focus on these aspects has increased awareness and improved accessibility to quality care for patients from diverse backgrounds. By addressing learned behaviours and ensuring fair and equitable treatment, the NHS aims to provide culturally sensitive care.

Catherine recognises that there is still progress to be made and emphasises the significance of actively listening to feedback from the workforce, promoting open communication, and implementing training programs to address inequalities and biases.

“A large cultural shift - equality and diversity agenda has done nothing but increase awareness”

A conversation with Catherine Bilbrough shed light on the profound impact of the NHS on healthcare accessibility, affordability, and patient care.

“We need to continue focusing on standards and making sure that we have a continuous cycle of improvement. We need to know the things that have gone wrong so that we can address them and build and learn from it”

As the NHS celebrates 75 years, it is essential to recognise the achievements made in providing free healthcare and maintaining high standards of care. The evolving nursing practices, advancements in medical equipment, and cultural diversity initiatives have played a crucial role in improving patient outcomes and ensuring quality care for all. The NHS continues to strive for excellence, and through ongoing dedication and innovation, it remains a symbol of healthcare that the United Kingdom can be proud of.