Foreword

On behalf of the Mary Seacole Steering Committee, I am delighted to present to you this year’s annual report. The year has been a busy one for the committee members who have continued to give their time generously to support the progress of our work and each of the winners.

The committee has been impressed and inspired by the awardees this year and by their creative commitment to addressing health inequalities in their work – the reach of which has been further extended over 2013-2014 by studies in areas that are new to the awards process.

The committee is very grateful to Health Education England (HEE) for its continued funding of these vital awards. We have appreciated the discussion this year with HEE about how we work with them and I would like to take this opportunity to put on record my thanks to Dr. Lisa Bayliss Pratt for her commitment to securing the funding of the next generation of awardees. I would also like to put on record the thanks of all the committee to the Department of Health (England) and to NHS Employers for the intellectual support they have continued to make to the awards this year and over the two decades. The individual contribution of David Foster and Mohamed Yogi as the respective representatives of those bodies, and their enduring commitment to our work, has ensured that the awards process has become a robust platform on which each of the winners has demonstrated what can be achieved with specific funding to addressing health inequalities in their everyday clinical practice. I would also like to pay tribute to the invaluable and lengthy contribution made by Carol Baxter until her retirement from NHS Employers.

As chair of the committee, I would like to note particular thanks to all of the committee members. They have worked tirelessly and have made an outstanding contribution to the awards process. Stacy Johnson and Lihua Wu have joined the committee this year. Both are past awardees, and bring expertise in the field of health inequalities as they affect BME populations. Stacy is a lecturer in the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences at the University of Nottingham and Lihua is a lecturer in the School of Nursing at the University of Manchester. They will help us develop a new generation of nurses and midwives who are able to continue the momentum of the awards.
This is my final year as chair of the awards committee and I will be passing the baton to Janet Fyle, Professional Officer at the Royal College of Midwives. Obi Amadi, Professional Officer at Unite CPHVA will take over as Vice Chair. I would like to thank all the committee members for their support and contribution over the past year. I am particularly appreciative of the voluntary investment that our academic mentors make to awardees. I have learnt a great deal from the contribution that Vanessa Heaslip, Janet Scammell and Christine McKenzie have made to the committee and to their supervision and development of individual awardees. Thanks to each of you for your wisdom and generosity to the Mary Seacole Awards.

I would also like to express my appreciation to Amy Cole and Siobhan Smyth, who are the administrators of the awards. They have worked tirelessly to ensure that the awards infrastructure is updated and is fit for the purpose of sustaining the awards going forward. They have brought robustness to our processes and have created the networks that support the awardees throughout the award cycle. On behalf of all of the committee I extend my thanks to them.

I will be pleased to continue to represent the RCN on the committee and wish Janet well in her tenure as Chair.

Tom Sandford
Chair
Mary Seacole Awards Steering Group
The impact of the Mary Seacole Awards

In 2012, we published An evaluation of the impact of the awards. We wanted to independently assess the impact of the awards and the NHS Leadership Academy kindly funded this research. The findings clearly demonstrate the importance of the awards both to the individual as a platform for professional development but also the impact on the service in addressing health inequalities.

The Mary Seacole Awards were established to improve the unmet needs of black and minority ethnic communities in England. The evaluation demonstrated unequivocally that the awards have developed and inspired individual nurses, midwives and health visitors who have contributed to reducing health inequalities and improving health gain of our most underprivileged communities.

Staff are every organisation’s most valuable asset and investing in them is essential to ensuring vitality, motivation and commitment in the fast-changing health services. This year has witnessed a series of publications and initiatives that focus on the importance of good staff engagement as a means of realising the potential of NHS service development (Point of Care Foundation, 2014). The awardees consistently demonstrate that they grow, develop and become confident leaders and influencers as a direct consequence of the investment and belief shown in them through these awards. Their influence is being felt throughout the NHS and particularly among black and minority ethnic staff who continue to be under-represented in leadership positions in the NHS. This was confirmed again with the publication of The snowy white peaks of the NHS (2014) a report which confirms that there has been no significant progress around the discrimination in recruitment, promotion, training, treatment, discipline and pay that impacts black and minority ethnic staff. The provision of health care itself has been similarly undermined by race discrimination in service after service – maternity, mental health, cancer, sickle cell, dementia and so on – notably by failure to recognise the impact of these conditions on minority populations or the failure to commission appropriate services. We are pleased that the awards continue to contribute to more positive outcomes in these areas.

References

Point of Care Foundation (2014) Staff care – how to engage staff in the NHS and why it matters. The Point of Care Foundation: London.

Moving forward with the awards

The 2012 evaluation made a series of recommendations that the committee has been actioning over this last year. They are made in the belief that the firm foundations and achievements of the past two decades can be built on to develop even more effective leaders for the NHS and to meet the needs of, and improve health outcomes for, the diverse communities in Britain today.

In this spirit we have lobbied that the awards should continue in their present form, and have secured ongoing funding that delivers this. We have started to strengthen the system of support for award holders via mentors and academic supervisors through new appointments to the committee. We have recognised the vital, supportive role played by award holders’ colleagues and managers and have reinforced this by involving these individuals more actively in the awards process. In recognition that award holders are powerful and influential individuals, we have started the process of assessing how their impact could be enhanced further by bringing them together regularly after the completion of their projects in a Mary Seacole alumni group. There is great strength in the fact that the awards are supported by the key organisations in nursing, midwifery and health visiting: Department of Health, NHS Employers, Royal College of Nursing, Royal College of Midwives, UNISON and Unite CPHVA. We have continued to foster these collaborations and we continue to promote the awards to ensure that individuals with the potential to be effective leaders have the opportunity to apply and become part of the growing body of influencers to improve health outcomes and challenge health inequalities in modern Britain.

As the next chair, my objective will be to ensure that the awards deliver to the highest standard so that its impact is demonstrated at the clinical level and benefit patients. On behalf of the committee, I offer my sincere thanks and gratitude to Tom Sandford, our outgoing chair, and his team for their hard work and tireless efforts in securing continued funding for the awards and for successfully steering the committee over the past two years. We look forward to another year of exciting projects and innovation.

Janet Fyle, Royal College of Midwives
A summary of the work of individual award holders this year

Shirley Baah-Mensah

Receiving the Mary Seacole Development Award last year gave me the opportunity and platform to explore and provide evidence for how coaching can be used as a tool to improve ethnic diversity at senior management and leadership levels in the NHS.

The NHS is the single largest employer of Back and Minority Ethnic (BME) people in England yet the majority are concentrated at the lower levels of the organisation.

I was seeking to contribute to finding ways of making the NHS staff, at all levels of the organisation, a true representation of the communities it serves. I had the pleasure of designing, planning, delivering and evaluating a six-month coaching programme to a group of BME staff working in a vibrant outer London NHS Trust to better understand what they consider to be the barriers to progression and to identify ways to support these staff to reach their full potential in their careers.

Stepping up is a culturally appreciative coaching model designed to support the career management and progression, performance and achievement, leadership and personal development of BME professionals in the workplace. Engaged staff will lead to engaged community which will be linked to the organisation and the services it provides.

Undertaking this coaching project has been both challenging and rewarding. Working full time as a service manager and delivering an innovative coaching programme was very challenging, but seeing the transformation, motivation and empowerment to progress among the group of staff on the programme was highly fulfilling. I had the opportunity to network at a national level and I am developing greater self confidence, communication and influential skills; skills I believe, will help me in pushing forward the equality agenda for BME staff. The programme has won a second national award.
Katie De Freitas

The Mary Seacole Award has provided me with a platform to make a real difference and improve the care and services provided to women and their families. The wide and varied learning opportunities have enabled me to develop a greater understanding of the women’s health agenda both nationally and internationally.

The project I undertook sought to explore and develop cultural competence training for midwives. This was undertaken within Dartford and Gravesham NHS Trust, an organisation experiencing a rise in birth rate and changing local population in terms of the demography. The lack of a standardised tool meant that there was fragmentation in how staff developed understanding around cultural competency - this is an area in which midwives reported feeling ill-equipped. Working in partnership with midwives and women from BME communities enabled the realities of care to this group of women to be understood and through a negotiated plan develop the outline content for an e-learning training programme. This has been considered as a key step towards providing all women with high quality care, regardless of their ethnicity or background. It is particularly important for women from BME communities who are known to have poorer pregnancy outcomes and poor experiences of maternity care.

This project is the foundation for the implementation of ongoing work which will help to better support midwives in meeting the diverse needs of their communities. The Mary Seacole Award has been extremely rewarding and helped me to find my own voice and the confidence to take on new challenges.
Jackie Haden and Fiona Allen

Jackie and I were ecstatic and surprised when we won the Mary Seacole Development award. We were both new in our posts and had made the first clinical commissioning group (CCG) and safeguarding children application. We both work in the largest local authority in Europe with one of the fastest growing youth populations in the country. Birmingham is a super diverse city and Jackie and I wanted to explore how, as professionals, we work to safeguard children and their families from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds.

The project was divided into two elements. The first part comprised a systematic review which enabled us to scope the level of understanding of safeguarding children of BME backgrounds within the city of Birmingham, UK and Europe. The second part of the project was the development and production of a training DVD that will be used as an interactive tool to raise the awareness of safeguarding BME children to frontline practitioners.

Our aim for this project is to promote how we work with these children and their families. We want to build practitioners’ skills to assess potential risks so that we ‘can hear and see’ all children and give them the opportunity to grow into healthy happy adults.

Winning the award has enabled us to raise the profile of safeguarding as well as developing professionally and becoming part of an amazing alumni group.

Perfect Tiritega Mawaka

There are no words to describe this past year. I was very excited to receive the Mary Seacole Leadership Award. My project’s aim was to begin to gain some insight from the participant’s view, the ‘lived experience’ from the perspectives of individuals of black ethnicity living with dementia. Currently, the research base exploring the perspective of living with dementia within ethnic minority groups is limited and I wanted to focus on this area, as often ethnic minority patients experience health inequalities through lack of access to appropriate health and social care services. During this past year, I listened and I grew. I listened to the patients’ stories and there is something to be learnt from every experience. This project is a work in progress which contributes to further doctoral research. The funders of the Mary Seacole Leadership Awards and the members of the Mary Seacole Awards Steering Group have my gratitude.
Calvin Moorley

I have worked and studied in East London for the past 15 years. Recently East London has become synonymous with the success of the 2012 Olympic Games; historically it is a place of settlement for migrant communities and known for health inequalities and deprivation, which still exists today. Receiving the Mary Seacole Leadership Award allowed me to further develop my work in life after a stroke among ethnic minority groups in East London.

The benefits of this award have been twofold. Firstly it has helped me to develop as a researcher; building and expanding my skills in research with ethnic minority groups, helping me to take a more muscular approach to working with those affected by stroke and organisations providing stroke care and support. This approach was facilitated by the support of the Mary Seacole Awards Steering Group with provision of academic and professional mentors. Secondly the award signalled that ethnic minority groups possess a voice and the Mary Seacole Award acted as a conduit in my project for the voice of Black and Asian stroke carers. It has helped to identify the role of culture in caring which can help reduce the inequalities in stroke aftercare for such groups. I have found that the Mary Seacole Leadership Award provides a space to debate, research and provide equitable health care for diverse ethnic groups.

Sarah Rutherford

I was honoured to receive a Mary Seacole Development Award in 2013 to undertake a project which explored the barriers to access to development opportunities for Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) health care support workers. Through questionnaires and focus groups, I explored the reasons why BME support workers were not applying for or selected for new roles which would enhance their qualifications, role and pay. I spoke to health care support workers who were African-Caribbean, African, Black-British, British-Asian and qualified Indian nurses to explore their experiences of career opportunities and aspirations.

In order to ensure the results were robust, I had the opportunity to undertake valuable training in qualitative data analysis and interpretation. The award steering group organised a really interesting visit to the Department of Health, as well as very useful media training and report writing.

I had talked about doing this project for ages and the Mary Seacole Award gave me the incentive and focus to get it off the ground. Although once this part was completed, I realised that the task was just beginning. The challenge now is to get that message out there to funders and providers of training to ensure that they are actually offering equality of opportunity.
### Financial statement for Mary Seacole Award bursaries 1 October 2013 – 31 September 2014

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Mary Seacole Steering Group

**Tom Sandford, Chair**  
RCN representative  
Director for RCN England  
Royal College of Nursing

**Gail Adams**  
UNISON representative  
Head of Nursing UNISON

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Bournemouth University

**Lihua Wu**  
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Lecturer  
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**Amy Cole/Siobhan Smyth**  
Awards Officer  
Governance Adviser  
Royal College of Nursing

**Janet Fyle, Vice Chair**  
RCM representative  
Professional Policy Adviser  
Royal College of Midwives

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**Dr David Foster**  
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**Mohamed Jogi**  
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