

2025-2026

IMPACT REPORT



**Supporting nurses and midwives
to stay, thrive, lead and transform**

“Being awarded an FNF Scholarship was a defining moment in my leadership journey. It created the space to step back, learn globally and think differently about how people’s voices, equity and inclusion can be embedded in healthcare systems - not as an add-on, but as a core measure of quality and safety.”

Richard Desir, Scholar Alumnus



A year of leadership in action

Nurses and midwives are the backbone of health and care. They hold services together, improve lives every day, and lead change in some of the most complex environments in society.

This year has shown what happens when nurses and midwives are given the confidence, skills and support to lead. Across the UK and internationally, FNF scholars, programme participants and alumni have improved patient outcomes, influenced policy and transformed services.

At a time when health and care systems face unprecedented pressures, investing in nursing and midwifery leadership has never been more important.

FNF supports nurses and midwives to stay, thrive, lead and transform.

In 2025–2026, 1,526 nurses and midwives participated in FNF leadership programmes and scholarships, and more than 245,000 nurses, midwives and students had access to our Academy.

These nurses and midwives supported by FNF in turn improved care for thousands of patients, strengthened teams across health and care services, influenced national policy, and completed 348 quality improvement projects.

Behind every number is a nurse or midwife leading change for patients, colleagues and communities. Their leadership is changing care, and FNF is helping make it happen.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Greta Westwood".

Professor Greta Westwood CBE, RN
Chief Executive Officer, FNF

STAY

We help nurses and midwives stay in the profession they love

Retention is one of the greatest workforce challenges facing health and care. Around 1 in 6 nurses and 1 in 10 midwives leave their NHS roles within the first two years of registration.[1]

Too many nurses and midwives are leaving early or questioning whether they can see a future in the profession they love.

FNF is helping change that.

Research shows that nurses and midwives are more likely to stay when they feel connected to their profession, can see opportunities for growth, have supportive networks, and feel able to influence change.[2]

Our programmes reconnect nurses and midwives with their purpose, strengthen their confidence, surround them with supportive networks and open up pathways for growth. We help them feel valued, connected and able to influence change - the conditions that make staying possible.

97% of programme participants said they would remain in nursing or midwifery

75% of those who said they would remain named FNF as highly or moderately influential in that decision

[1] Nuffield Trust. Research report, September 2023. Waste not, want not: Strategies to improve the supply of clinical staff to the NHS.

[2] Pressley & Garside, 2023; Keith, Warshawsky & Talbert, 2021; Wallenburg et al., 2023

“The FNF programme reminded me why I want to stay and contribute to improving care for children, young people, and families”

Established Leaders Programme Alumna

That is not just personal development. It is workforce retention. It is system resilience. It is leadership making a measurable difference.

“These programmes have supported our early career and internationally recruited nurses and midwives to build confidence, develop leadership skills and gain a clearer understanding of NHS systems and ways of working. Overall, this investment has contributed positively to staff engagement and retention.”

Anne Dela Cerna, NMAHP Education Manager, University Hospitals Coventry and Warwickshire NHS Trust

FNF’s influence reaches far beyond individual participants. Our preceptorship research helped inform NHS England’s National Preceptorship Quality Mark, shaping the national standard for how newly registered nurses and midwives are supported in England.

We are not only helping nurses and midwives stay in the profession. We are helping shape the conditions, standards and systems that make staying possible.

THRIVE

We help nurses and midwives grow in confidence, belonging and ambition

Staying is only the beginning. Nurses and midwives must also be able to thrive. Thriving means feeling confident, connected, valued and able to achieve your potential. It means having the space to reflect, the courage to lead and a community that lets you know that you are not alone.

Through leadership development, coaching, mentoring, peer support and Academy membership, FNF helps nurses and midwives grow personally and professionally - building the confidence, connections and ambition they need to flourish.

70% of programme participants reported increased confidence and self-efficacy

28% of programme participants were promoted during or after their FNF programme

96% of those promoted said FNF was influential in helping them progress

67% of alumni are very or extremely proud to be part of the FNF community

Belonging matters

"The programme transformed how I lead. I listen differently. I teach differently. I influence differently. I no longer see leadership as standing at the front of the room. I see leadership in every conversation, every act of inclusion and every opportunity to help someone discover their potential."

Dr Shivarajkumar Dandagi, Windrush leadership programme alumnus

The impact of community and connection

As convener of communities of leaders across nursing and midwifery, FNF creates the spaces where those leaders connect, learn from one another and draw strength from shared experience.

The annual Member Symposium took place in March 2026, bringing together over 150 nurse and midwife leaders from across the FNF Academy member community. Designed for Chief Nurses, their deputies and leadership development leads, this year's theme - Leading Under the Spotlight - explored how Chief Nurses lead and sustain themselves under significant professional, organisational and public pressure.

“Every presentation and each presenter was simply inspirational, several were hugely courageous and I would like to reach out to thank them for their honesty and integrity. It was an outstanding, thought-provoking day which has left me feeling reflective and re-energised.”

Chief Nursing Officer, Academy member and Symposium attendee



More than 245,000 nurses, midwives and students had access to our Academy this year to learn, connect and grow as leaders - proof that leadership development is reaching the profession at scale.

245,000

nurses, midwives and students

“(through membership) nurses across the Trust can access leadership development programmes, mentorship, and professional networks. For early-career nurses, these opportunities create space for reflection, growth, and meaningful engagement in conversations about the future of nursing. Connecting with peers from across the country has reinforced the importance of collaboration and shared learning in strengthening our profession.”

Festus Chinedu Omeike
Manchester University NHS
Foundation Trust



This is the power of community. It builds confidence where doubt has crept in. It strengthens professional identity in a system that can erode it. And it creates the conditions for students, nurses, and midwives not just to survive, but to thrive - and, in turn, to lift others as they rise.

LEAD

We develop the leaders that health and care systems need

Health and care systems need nursing and midwifery leaders who are confident, compassionate and courageous - at every level, from the bedside to the boardroom. FNF develops the leaders we need.

From early-career professionals taking their first steps into leadership to executive leaders shaping national policy, our programmes build the skills, insight and influence nurses and midwives need to lead teams, improve services and change systems from within.

“It felt like exactly the right moment in my career to grow from being a clinical leader into a more influential one. The programme was validating, empowering, inspiring, and long overdue for social care nursing”

Michalae Thompson - Group Quality & Governance Manager | Senior Nurse, Forest Healthcare, Established Leadership programme alumna

2025 - 2026 by the numbers

1,526 nurses and midwives participated in leadership programmes and scholarships.

95% would recommend an FNF programme.

100% of scholars would recommend the scholarship experience.

72% reported increased leadership skills and knowledge.

87% of alumni believe they have contributed to improvements in their organisation.

Leading beyond organisations

Chief Nurses are increasingly called to lead beyond the walls of their own organisation - shaping national conversations, influencing policy, and setting standards the whole system will follow.

This year senior nursing and midwifery leaders used our new Chief Nurse Roundtable Series to do exactly that - coming together in a trusted space to grapple with national issues and feed their thinking directly into policy.

Chief Nurses also helped shape NHS England's Leadership and Management Framework, ensuring nursing and midwifery perspectives helped define a landmark national standard.

We are growing leaders who don't stop at the edge of their own workplace but who influence systems, shape policy and determine the future of health and care.

"The programme provided skills and knowledge I could use to keep my team motivated to continue providing the best possible patient care"

NHS Borders Leadership Programme alumna

TRANSFORM

Leaders who turn leadership into better care

Leadership matters most when it changes care.

For nurses, midwives and students in our programmes, leadership is not an abstract concept. It becomes action, improvement and measurable change - better care for patients, stronger teams, fairer services and more responsive systems.

In 2025-2026, programme participants completed 348 quality improvement projects, tackling some of the most pressing challenges facing health and care - proof that leadership, done well, is never just personal growth. It is better care, delivered.

348

quality improvement projects

Project Impact

67% focused on improving patient care and clinical outcomes

47% strengthened the workforce

20% tackled health inequalities

One Windrush Leadership Programme alumna saw a gap that patients were falling through: starting chemotherapy without the information or support they needed to face it. She didn't just flag the problem - she built the solution, designing a new chemotherapy education and support pathway from the ground up.

The impact was immediate:

Patient understanding nearly doubled, rising from 55% to 92%
Anxiety before treatment fell by 40%
Patient satisfaction improved from 68% to 91%

Improving care globally

Nurses and midwives on our leadership programme in Malawi - delivered in partnership with the Nurses and Midwives Council of Malawi and the Nursing Council of Kenya - did not stop at learning to lead. They used that leadership to change outcomes for patients by tackling:

- **Maternal health**
- **Newborn survival**
- **Infection prevention**
- **Paediatric emergency care**



This is the ripple effect of leadership. One nurse or midwife grows in confidence. A team works differently. A pathway improves. A patient has a better experience. A system begins to change, and it all started with someone believing they could lead.

“I want to change the world. Or at least, I want to change it for those living with liver disease. ...My quality improvement work focused on developing an integrated Advanced Chronic Liver Disease Multi-Disciplinary Team to improve outcomes, experience, and equity for patients with decompensated liver disease. It became the starting point for a wider shift in how we think about advanced liver disease, early palliation, and coordinated care. It has since expanded, been refined, and shared through national forums, integrating in-reach, community bridging, and a rapid discharge clinic.”

Katharine Caddick, Scholar alumna



Looking Ahead

Reaching further. Leading bolder. Changing more.

Our ambition for 2026-2027 is clear: to widen the reach, relevance and impact of FNF leadership development so that more nurses and midwives can lead with confidence, and more patients, families and communities feel the difference.

We will:

- **Widen access to leadership development.**
- **Align our leadership offer with the NHS Leadership and Management Framework.**
- **Build stronger evidence of long-term impact demonstrated by the alumni quality improvement projects.**
- **Strengthen Academy membership and pilot individual membership.**
- **Continue to influence policy and practice through research, insight and clinical leadership.**
- **Develop our 2027-30 Strategy, setting a bold direction for FNF's next chapter.**

Nurses and midwives do extraordinary work every day, often against extraordinary odds. FNF exists so they do not have to do it alone by giving them the leadership support, confidence, community and influence they need to keep going, keep leading and change the future of care.

Thank You

Your support makes this impact possible

Every programme, scholarship, membership benefit, policy contribution and leadership opportunity delivered this year exists because of the generosity, commitment and partnership of our donors, commissioners, members, alumni and supporters.

Together, we are investing in nurses and midwives - giving them the confidence, support and influence to lead.

Together, we are helping them stay in the profession, thrive in their careers, lead with purpose and transform care.

Together, we are strengthening the future of nursing and midwifery - and changing care for the people and communities who depend on it.

Thank you for standing with us. Because of you, nurses and midwives are leading, and care is changing. We look forward to you continuing that journey with us.

2025-2026 Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements

Scan the QR code to view the latest FNF Annual Report and Consolidated Financial Statements on our website.





Florence Nightingale Foundation
10 - 18 Union Street
London SE1 1SZ

020 7730 3030
admin@florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk
florence-nightingale-foundation.org.uk

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