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## An opportunity to give unsung NHS heroes the recognition they deserve

Written by Maria Caulfield, Conservative MP for Lewes. on 1 September 2020

NHS Parliamentary Awards: An opportunity to give unsung NHS heroes the recognition they deserve

NHS staff went above and beyond when their country called, writes Maria Caulfield MP. | PA Images



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This year, more than any other, it's vital for Members of Parliament to recognise the work of health heroes across the country

As well as being the MP for Lewes, I am also a proud nurse and have worked in the NHS for over 25 years.

During this time I thought I had seen it all; from births, deaths, major incidents, discoveries in the treatments of cancer, cardiac arrests, good news being given to patients and holding the hand of someone as they left this world.

Nothing prepared me for what I witnessed going back to the wards in March of this year to help out during the Covid crisis.

I hadn't practised for a few months since joining the whips office and my first day back I was straight on the Covid ward. I was working alongside colleagues I had worked with for many years, but the wards felt strangely alien.

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Gone were the visitors who usually cheerfully greeted us at the start of a shift. Gone were the multitude of support staff working in the hospital. Gone were the smiles from the doctors, nurses, cleaners and porters who had to stay and fight the disease while the UK population were banished to their homes.

Where would we be as a country without those doctors, nurses, radiographers, porters, cleaners?

Those NHS staff went above and beyond when their country called.

Not only were they caring for the sickest of patients, but in doing so they knew they were putting themselves and their family's health at risk if they brought the virus home.

On one ward where I worked only two nurses out of 24 managed to escape catching the virus.

At the beginning there was fear on the wards. None of us knew how to wear the masks properly and we eagerly waited to be fit-tested so we had the correct size on.

Wearing a mask, gown, gloves and eye protection for 12 hours at a time is exhausting. The ties of the mask rub on your ears and constantly washing your hands until they bleed became a daily occurrence. But the teams got on with it because they knew the patients they were looking after was someone's loved one who needed them.

Where would we be as a country without those doctors, nurses, radiographers, porters, cleaners?

This year, more than any other, there is a chance for MPs to recognise the work of these health heroes across the country.

[The NHS Parliamentary Awards](#) <sup>[3]</sup> provides an excellent opportunity for MPs to get involved in the awards and nominate NHS staff from their constituencies for health and care organisations who have gone above and beyond during this crisis.

There are some real unsung NHS heroes for whom the Parliamentary awards is an opportunity to thank them so please if you are a MP, do nominate your local NHS staff and teams. There are ten categories so plenty of scope to cover a multitude of heroes.

I will certainly be nominating a number of people for these NHS parliamentary awards. They deserve our recognition and thanks every year, but this year more than most.

*Maria Caulfield is the Conservative MP for Lewes.*

***To find out more about the NHS Parliamentary Awards and how you can get involved***

visit <http://www.nhsparliamentaryawards.co.uk/> [3]

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Maria Caulfield, Conservative MP for Lewes.

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