

NHS Lothian nurse meets royals at the NHS Big Tea 75th anniversary party

A nurse who is a clinical lead at NHS Lothian, Fiona Shanks from Edinburgh, met with Their Royal Highnesses the Prince and Princess of Wales at a tea party in London to mark the NHS 75th anniversary.

Fiona was clinical lead for the Test and Protect service in NHS Lothian during the pandemic, setting it up from scratch to try and contain the virus.

The tea party held in the wellbeing garden at St Thomas Hospital in London was hosted by NHS Charities Together of which the royal couple are patrons, and Fiona was the sole Scottish guest.

Fiona said: "I didn't quite know what to expect but it really has been a fantastic day. I saw the cake first and thought, 'ooh that's a nice cake', and then I realised who was carrying the cake and I thought 'ooh ok!', and then 'I'm going to have to speak to royalty' and when I actually did they were absolutely lovely. We don't always feel special in the NHS, but this has been a very special day, it's been incredible.

"I've been a nurse for 37 years and it's all I ever wanted to do, so I've never contemplated working anywhere else but the

NHS. Being recognised by the Prince and Princess of Wales, who clearly have an understanding of what we do, was just remarkable. I spoke to Prince William, who was very interested in how we look after our wellbeing and each other. He hit the nail on the head saying that we are so wrapped up in helping others that we don't often seek help for ourselves. And he understood the importance of protecting staff mental health and the support NHS charities provide in this."

Ellie Orton OBE, Chief Executive of NHS Charities Together, said: "We want to say a huge thank you to our Royal Patrons, and everyone who's helped celebrate the 75th anniversary of our beloved NHS this year. As the national charity caring for the NHS, NHS Charities Together is here for anyone who wants to give something back to its people, who all give so much to us, and that extra support has never been so important. It includes providing staff psychologists, counselling, peer support training and so much more.

"It's not too late to arrange your own NHS Big Tea party and raise vital funds to support NHS charities – find out how you can get involved at nhscharitiestogether.co.uk."



Prince William and Catherine Princess of Wales and Alice Fevronia



Prince William sitting next to Fiona at the tea party