

Celebrating excellence

Health visitor Ruth Oshikanlu has received a number of accolades in 2014, recognising her immense contribution to the profession. Madeleine Murphy reports on this success.

December is a time to reflect on the past year and celebrate achievements. And for one health visitor, 2014 has provided a great deal to celebrate.

With more than 20 years' experience as a midwife and health visitor, Ruth Oshikanlu is no stranger to achievement. She is a Queen's Nurse and an innovative practitioner, who last year developed a toolkit to help pregnant women and new mothers 'tune in' to the needs of their babies. She previously worked in one of the first Family Nurse Partnership pilot sites, and has a passion for working with vulnerable families and socially excluded groups. In the past year, a number of national organisations have recognised her excellence and awarded her with some impressive accolades.

In March, Ruth was named Community Practitioner of the Year at the Community Practitioners and Health Visitors Association awards. The success continued as the year went on, and in May the Queen's Nursing Institute (QNI) gave Ruth the Queen Mother's Award for Outstanding Service. This award was founded in 1994 and is presented to nurses and midwives who have given service over and above the call of duty, and have made a particularly distinguished contribution to the health of people in the community.

Ruth has also been included on the *Health Service Journal* list of BME Pioneers for 2014. This list celebrates



Ruth Oshikanlu with England's chief nursing officer Jane Cummings at the Queen's Nursing Institute Spring Awards in May, and being named a BME Pioneer by the Health Service Journal in November



IMAGES: QNI/HSJ

individuals from Black and Minority Ethnic backgrounds who, through leadership and their day-to-day work, inspire others and help to deliver excellent care.

Finally, to round off a year of celebrations, Ruth has been named a Fellow of the Institute of Health Visiting (iHV). The iHV launched its Fellowship scheme this year to recognise the professional achievement of exceptional health visitors and create a national group of leaders who can help to develop the next generation of health visitors, integrate new policy and research into practice, and ensure the profession makes a real difference to the health outcomes of children and their families. Professor

Dame Sarah Cowley, a Trustee of the iHV, said at the institute's 2-year anniversary event in December that 150 Fellows will have been identified by the end of this year. Their certificates will be awarded at a celebration event in March 2015.

Following this stream of prestigious accolades, we are delighted to announce that Ruth Oshikanlu will begin contributing a regular column to *JHV* in 2015. Her experience, enthusiasm and dedication to the profession are sure provide great insight and food for thought for our readers. Meanwhile, other Fellows of the iHV will also be writing for us each month, highlighting their contribution to the health visiting profession. **JHV**