



RCN
STUDENTS

'IT'S MADE US

STRONGER





How one student's viral video has helped fund her nursing degree

Naana Aisha's dream to become a nurse has involved hard choices

in fact, she would have to self-fund the full three years of her degree. She says she'd been misinformed by student finance officials previously and that the news left her "broken".

Be a hero

"It was like all that hard work had been for nothing. I felt so let down and emotional. I had tried so hard to help myself but all I could see was how much more money I would have to save. I was at breaking point.

"I don't know what compelled me to do it, but I picked up my phone, hit record, and let it all out. It wasn't rehearsed. I just had to say what I was feeling. I wasn't even asking for money at that stage. Just help. I was so desperate in that moment."

Naana Aisha's video on Instagram and within hours it had gone viral. Though her followers are friends and family, the video got picked up by a meme page with millions of followers. It was suggested she set up a GoFundMe page and Naana Aisha reignited one she created previously that had raised about £200.

The response this time was phenomenal. The fundraiser

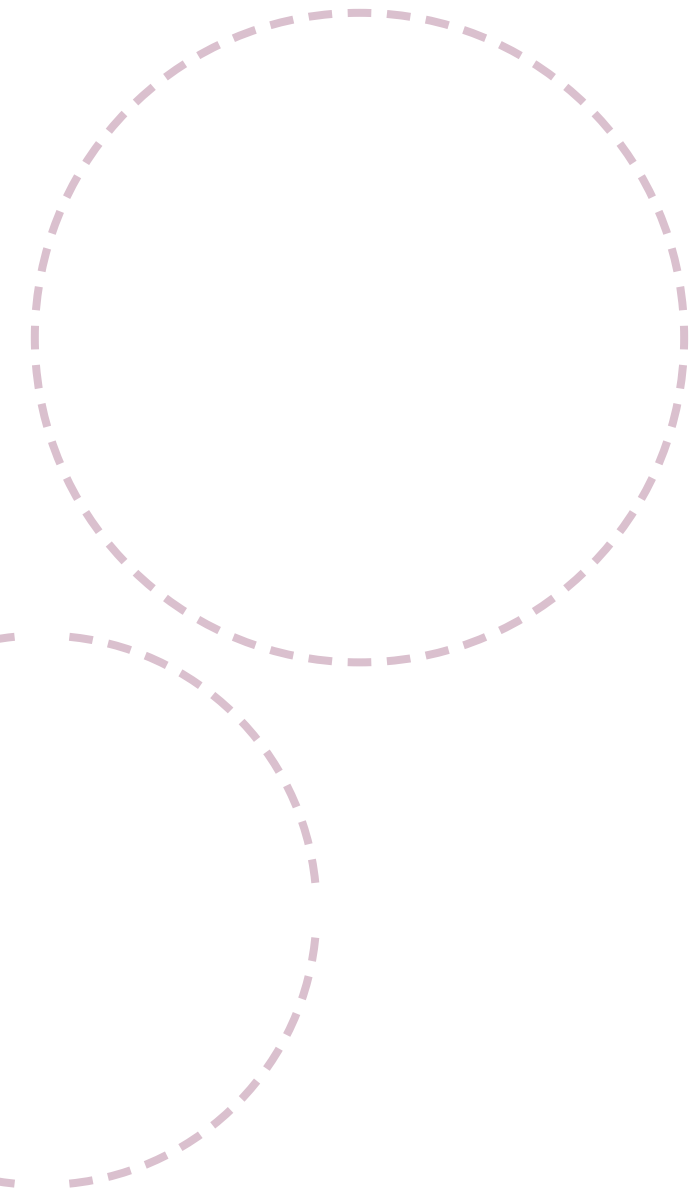
has received more than 2,700 contributions, with the total amount donated standing at nearly £41,000. Model and actress Cara Delevingne was among those who gave money to the appeal, donating £2,000 with the words: "You are a gift on this planet, and I hope your dreams come true."

"I'm just so overwhelmed and thankful," says Naana Aisha. "You see this sort of thing happen to other people, but I never in a million years thought it would happen to me. I have been given a chance by everyone."

Naana Aisha has already used some of the money as a deposit for student accommodation in Leicester for September. She plans to use the rest on fees and travel costs. "The money means a chance to focus

on my studies," she says. "I can live in the same city as my university, go to the library and spend time with other students without the pressure of having to work all the time.

"If I could give any advice to other nursing students who are struggling, it is to speak out. Don't hold everything in or try to cope with things on your own. It is so hard, and you'll end up getting burnt out. Speak up and you'll be surprised by how many people are willing to help you."



Nursing students must feel confident and empowered to alert senior colleagues if they think their patient could have sepsis

Sepsis is a life-threatening condition that occurs when the body overreacts to an infection. Although treatable in many cases, the UK Sepsis Trust says at least 48,000 deaths a year in the UK are related to it.

It causes the immune system to go into overdrive, often making the body attack its own tissues and organs. This sparks a series of reactions including widespread inflammation and decreased blood pressure.

As a result, the blood supply to vital organs is reduced. They become starved of oxygen, leading to multiple organ failure and potentially death.

The key to managing sepsis is speed; it needs to be recognised early and treated quickly. This is where nurses, midwives and nursing support workers can make a real difference.

Recognise sepsis

Sepsis can be tricky to spot as there are lots of possible symptoms. A patient may be acting confused, slurring their speech or not making sense. They may have blue, pale or blotchy skin, lips or tongue, or a rash that does not fade when you roll a glass over it.

The patient may experience difficult breathing, or be breathing very fast, and often they are mistakenly diagnosed with the flu.

Do the following

The most important thing to do if you suspect sepsis is to alert a senior health care professional. It doesn't matter what your role may be, it's always best to flag your concerns.

If a patient has symptoms that indicate possible infection, always think "could this be sepsis?" Doing an early warning score such as the National Early Warning Score (NEWS 2) can help. Then you can raise the alarm quickly to a senior colleague and prioritise care so the patient can be treated in a timely manner.

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Your placement provider will have local policies and protocols for the early identification and management of patients with sepsis, which you should familiarise yourself with.

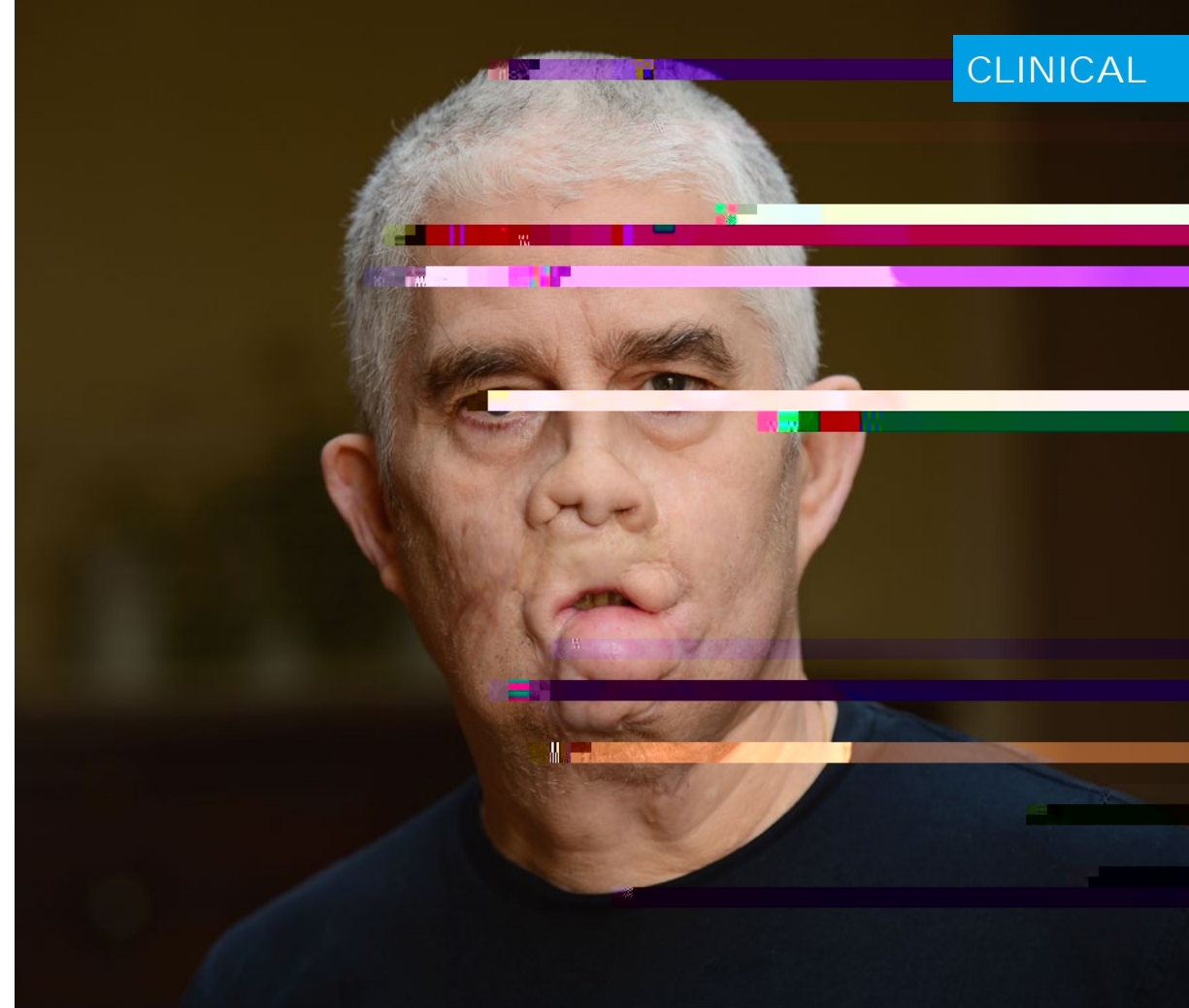
Treat sepsis

Sepsis can be treated with antibiotics, and the sooner they're administered the better potential outcomes for patients.

Depending on the source of infection and symptoms, a patient may require critical care, where they can be closely monitored and treated appropriately. Patients may require a ventilator, vasopressors, and in some cases surgery, to remove the source of sepsis.

Most people make a full recovery from sepsis, but there can be long-term health effects known as post-sepsis syndrome.

Symptoms include feeling very tired and weak, difficult sleeping, lack of appetite, getting ill more often, anxiety or depression, nightmares or flashbacks, and post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).



I was 38 when I got sepsis. I was in a coma,

no doctors immediately at hand," she says. "You're assessing someone rapidly, triaging and making referrals. The residents are reliant on you and your skills to know exactly what to do to help them."

In 2019, the programme – believed to be the first of its kind in the country – won a Cavell nursing star award. In response to students' feedback, a short placement of a couple of weeks is now available to those at the start of their degree too.

"You're paired with a resident with the aim of helping you to really understand that individual," explains Jemma.

"As a first-year student, you may never have been in a care home before or met anyone like a JJO - 2.1 (gr. 7.1) tre b. (5.5) trg Td (10.5) 18 (m) 86 b)

Individual responsibility 

For Jemma, the opportunity to have a high level of individual responsibility is among the key attractions of nursing in a care home. "You're often working on your own, taking care of several poorly people, with

“Part of the student ambassador role is trying to instil the fire and passion you have in fellow students,” says Scott Doughty, Vice Chair of the RCN Students Committee.

Scott has been involved in work to develop the RCN student ambassador role, which was launched at the end of 2019. The role descriptor includes a specific section on campaigning, and highlights ways student ambassadors can encourage other student members to get involved in RCN campaigns and ensure their experiences help shape them.

Scott says: “You’re not going to make changes straight away. Issues like fair pay

