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NHS 75: Baby born on first day becomes hospital boss

- Published

5 July

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Image caption,

Melloney Poole was one of the first babies born under the NHS

By Charlotte Andrews

BBC News

A woman who was born on the day the NHS launched is now the boss of a hospital trust despite her fear of blood.

Melloney Poole was born in Sheffield on 5 July 1948 and was one of the first babies to be delivered by midwives working under the health service.

After a brief stint training as a nurse, Ms Poole decided her skills laid elsewhere and is now the chair of Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust.

The **NHS is marking its 75th anniversary** on Wednesday.



IMAGE SOURCE, PORTSMOUTH NHS TRUST

Image caption,

Ms Poole has been chair of Portsmouth University Hospitals Trust since 2017
Ms Poole puts her career in healthcare down to her early experiences with the NHS.

When her mother had a stroke and passed away, she recalls the "care and compassion" she was shown by hospital staff.

Inspired by that, she began training as a nurse.

"The trouble was, I was more of a problem to the nursing team than a benefit because I kept fainting at the sight of blood," she said.

"I had to remove myself from that situation."

She went on to have a career in law, and in 2017 was appointed chair of Portsmouth Hospitals University Trust, a role she is "incredibly proud" of.

The trust covers Queen Alexandra Hospital, St Mary's Hospital, Gosport War Memorial Hospital and Petersfield Community Hospital.



Image caption,

Ms Poole had to quit nursing because of her fear of blood

Ms Poole believes NHS healthcare has changed "immeasurably" over the past 75 years.

She said: "When I was a young schoolgirl, our geography mistress went into one of the hospitals for a cataract operation and she had to lay on her back for three months.

"But I had a cataract operation on the NHS in January and I was in for an hour-and-a-half, and home that evening."

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