

Dr Navina Evans CBE, Hon DSc

Thursday 23rd July 2026

Orator: Professor Gavin Perkins, Dean of Warwick Medical School

Provost

It is a great pleasure to introduce our Honorary Graduand, the former Chief Workforce, Training and Education Officer at NHS England: DR NAVINA EVANS.

Dr Evans' medical background is in child and adolescent psychiatry; she worked for some years in this field at East London NHS Foundation Trust (ELFT). In 2011, she moved into Health Management and Leadership, becoming Deputy Chief Executive and Chief Operating Officer at ELFT and from 2016 to 2020, the Trust's CEO, overseeing its transition to a nationally recognised leader in mental health and community care. In 2020, she became Chief Executive of Health Education England, and from 2023 to 2025 was the Chief Workforce, Training and Education Officer for NHS England, playing a central role in launching and implementing the NHS's first Long Term Workforce Plan. Navina is currently Health Executive in Residence at UCL's Global Business School for Health and an Honorary Professor here at Warwick Medical School.

During her impressive career, Navina has driven major changes in the NHS. The Long-Term Workforce Plan addressed staff shortages, planning for staff provision for the next 15 years: at ELFT, Navina had included workforce projections into the People Plan which she had developed for the Trust. At Health Education England, she championed modernised, technology driven training, pushed for more flexible career pathways for clinical staff, and guided HEE through its merger with NHS England in 2022, centralising the NHS's approach to education and training. The NHS Long-Term Workforce Plan provided for extra Medical School places and expanded training for medical professionals, introducing new apprenticeship routes for clinical staff. The Plan also expanded flexible working options, which Navina regards as a key issue in staff retention.

Navina also worked to bring about changes to NHS culture. Here she led by example, with a leadership style that was compassionate and inclusive. She insisted on the importance of nurturing staff, of listening to their views through periodic consultation and feedback. She particularly stressed the need to promote staff wellbeing and mental health: in 2024, she played a key role in ensuring extended funding for the NHS Practitioner Health Service - a critical mental health lifeline for struggling medical professionals.



She promoted mentoring and coaching, explaining that it was largely due to advice from her own mentors that she made the transition to health service management. And she has always prioritised the establishment of an inclusive environment. A female clinician of international background – Navina was born in Malaysia – who has risen to national leadership within the NHS, she has been a constant advocate of inclusion, equality and diversity (EDI) within the NHS. She played a central role in launching two important EDI initiatives – the National Learner Assembly, which prioritised EDI leadership development, and the NHS EDI Improvement Plan (2023) that set targeted actions to address discrimination.

In 2020 Navina was awarded a CBE for services to NHS leadership and the BAME community. She has been a vital force for change and improvement in the NHS: we are delighted to recognise her contribution today by the award of an honorary degree.

Provost: in the name of the Senate, I present to you for admission to the degree of Doctor of Science *honoris causa*, DR NAVINA EVANS.

