

# Professor Dame

# Elizabeth Anionwu

1947–Present



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## What did she discover?

Elizabeth is a professor of nursing and health care administrator. She was born in 1947 in Birmingham, England. She dreamed of becoming a nurse after being inspired by the nursing nun who looked after her.

Anionwu started to pursue her dream of becoming a nurse at the age of 16; she worked as a school nurse assistant. She then went on to study to become a state registered nurse at Paddington General Hospital. She became the first Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia nurse specialist in the UK. Both Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia are blood disorders, which people of African descent

are at higher risk of inheriting than other ethnic groups. Some forms of Thalassaemia are also common in people of Southeast Asian, Indian, Chinese or Filipino descent. Elizabeth later became a professor of nursing and taught in many different universities; she also established a course at the Institute of Child Health called 'Genetic Counselling for the Community: A multi-ethnic perspective'. This course aimed to educate people about the different ethnic groups who are at higher risk of certain inherited diseases, and disorders, to raise awareness.

She was appointed as a Dame in 2001 for her services to nursing, and she was inducted into the Nursing Hall of Fame for her dedication to the development of nurse-led services; amongst other awards.

## Something to think about...

Why is it important for patients to understand the risks of inherited diseases?