

Setting up a RiCH Regional Group

What you need to know

RiCH is for all RCN members interested in research in the field of Child Health and Children's Nursing, whether as active researchers, practitioners or students wanting to increase the evidence base for their practice. RiCH group consists of a steering committee and a growing number of regional groups. Membership is free and open to all RCN members.

The philosophy of the group is to support, encourage and inform all those involved in the nursing care of children, to become involved in the development of a sound body of evidence for the nursing care of children. This philosophy of openness, positive encouragement, sharing of information and expertise underpins the development of the group.

The regional groups

The aim of the regional groups is to provide a nationwide network for nurses at all stages of development to exchange information about research developments in child health practices in order to provide 'best' evidence based care for the child and family. The regional groups provide greater local access to RiCH for members. These groups are free to all RCN members.

The regional groups are aimed at nurses from all areas: clinical and non-clinical nurses, nurse teachers and students. It is not a requirement that in order to attend a meeting a nurse must be undertaking a research project. On the contrary, regional group meetings are to share an interest in research in the field of child health.

There are currently 12 active regional groups in Manchester, Newcastle, East-Midlands, Sheffield, North and West Yorkshire, Birmingham, Bristol, Oxford, Wessex, South Yorkshire, Northern Ireland and the Eastern region. This number is set to expand with more groups already in the planning stages.

Responsibilities of a regional group co-ordinator

If you decide to take on this role you will be expected to:

Each regional group co-ordinator should endeavour that:

- ❑ Their group holds at least two meetings a year
- ❑ The meetings gain wide local publicity
- ❑ They provide a report to the national regional co-ordinator regarding group activity before each steering committee meeting (twice a year)
- ❑ They provide a report to the regional groups co-ordinator regarding group activity for inclusion in Newslink (three times a year)
- ❑ They attend the annual regional group co-ordinators meeting (or send a representative)
- ❑ Attend the annual RiCH strategy meeting (or send a representative)
- ❑ Publicise and encourage attendance at RiCH's annual study day

Setting up a Local RiCH Group

There is no doubt that commitment and enthusiasm are essential for setting up a regional group. Each regional co-ordinator has commenced their groups using creative and strategic initiatives in different ways. The following suggestions may help:

- Check where the RiCH regional groups are already established through contacting **National Regional Groups Co-ordinator (address at the end)**.
- If you decide to set up your own group we would recommend that you attend a regional group co-ordinators meeting first.
- Send a letter, e-mail or poster to as many local nurses involved with child health and children's nursing as possible in order to establish interest.
- Posters may help 'rally' initial members and have been utilised in the clinical field and local university nursing departments.
- Set a date for returning replies of interest. We suggest that you need to RSVP to a permanent work address as responses have varied from 30 to 200!

At the first meeting establish the topics to be covered, venues and timing of meetings for your group. Some groups organise half-day events twice a year whilst others have evening meetings three times a year or meet for two hours every other month.

Examples of sessions from existing groups include:

- Local, national and international 'business' including conferences dates, RiCH group information
- 'Expert' speakers sharing research projects (at all stages) and/or literature reviews. Some have presented about research process issues whilst others have shared their subject knowledge and the results of their research.
- Information sessions and folders pertaining to the joys and problems of research such as critical appraisal of articles, literature searching, getting on the Internet and research proposal writing.

If your group covers a large geographical area, you may also find it useful to rotate the venue. Venues can include hospitals, community settings and educational institutions.

Resources

Probably the first consideration will be to run the group alone or take a team approach. Having the help of other people running a group does share the workload and the resources you are likely to need:

- Access to and skills of working a computer are essential.
- Access to email is useful, but not essential.
- Knowledge of your RCN branch office who may be able to help in the management of mailing lists, advertising the group events and offer meeting rooms for you.
- Key people in each hospital/geographical area to cascade information to members, such as possible venues, newsletters and minutes.

If you would like to set up a regional group in your area please contact the National Regional Groups Co-ordinator:

Theresa Pengelly

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Further information about RiCH can be found on our web page:

<http://www.rcn.org.uk/RiCH>