



# RCN Forums

## Shaping nursing practice and policy

### 2010–2011



## What are forums?

RCN Forums are networks of RCN members with a particular nursing specialty or with like interests. They enable members of the nursing team to come together and help to shape the world of nursing practice and policy. They represent the RCN's pool of professional expertise and knowledge.

All RCN members, including students and health practitioners, can join as many forums as they wish. Forum members receive email newsletters, including updates on the work of their forum and news from their specialty.

Each forum has a steering committee, appointed from amongst the forum's membership. The committee is the centre of activity for the forum, leading and facilitating the development of policy and practice within their specialist area, and often working collaboratively with other forums and other organisations. Committee members also seek to engage with forum members and represent their diverse views.

Forums are supported in their work by the RCN Nursing Department team.

## What do forums do?

Forums work to develop nursing policy and practice - and ultimately to improve care - in many ways. Forum projects include:

- developing guidance and competence documents for nursing staff
- carrying out research
- working with other organisations to develop guidance and policy
- organising conferences to spread good practice.

Steering committees carry out this work through funding allocated by the Forums Governance Group. This group ensures that the work of the forums helps the RCN meet its strategic objectives.



# Celebrating success in 2010–2011

We've gathered together just a few of the projects carried out by forums over the last year to give you a taste of the work they do to improve nursing practice, develop care, and support patient care.

## **Forum: RCN Learning Disability Nursing Forum**

### **Project: *Learning from the past – setting out the future: Developing learning disability nursing in the UK***

This position paper sets out the background, key issues, evidence and action plan for 2011 and beyond. It highlights how the population of children, adults and older people with learning disabilities is increasing, and the central role that learning disability (LD) nurses play in meeting the complex health needs of this patient group.

The paper stemmed from a resolution at RCN Congress 2010, in which Congress voted overwhelmingly to support the role of the LD nurse. It was produced in conjunction with the UK Learning Disability Consultant Nurses Network.

Key stakeholders attended a successful launch event for the paper in January 2011. An announcement in February 2011 by Scotland's Chief Nursing Officer Ros Moore set out the commitment of all four Department of Health leads to support LD nursing education and career pathways to support people who have a learning disability, whether in acute hospital settings or elsewhere in the community.

The forum will now take the lead on behalf of members to progress the action points identified in the paper.

The paper can be downloaded free of charge from the RCN website at [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications)

## **Forum: RCN Public Health Forum**

### **Project: *Panton-Valentine leukocidin positive Staphylococcus aureus (PVL-SA) guidance***

Some strains of Staphylococcus aureus bacteria produce a cytotoxin called Panton-Valentine leukocidin (PVL), which can cause tissue necrosis and severe infection.

A working group under the Public Health Forum and led by Infection Control Adviser Rose Gallagher produced a poster which ensures that clinical indications of PVL-SA infection are recognised promptly. This means that advice and treatment can be sought as soon as possible, reducing the risk of transmission to others within the household, wider community or health care setting.

This poster represents the first in a series of resources designed to help members recognise and manage potential or confirmed cases of PVL-SA. A podcast was produced, and an electronic resource to be used in conjunction with the poster is being developed.

The poster can be downloaded free of charge from the RCN website at [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications)

**Forum: RCN Mental Health Forum**

**Project: *Mental health nursing – keep it in mind film***

One of the major successes of the forum this year has been the production of two short films about mental health nursing. One provides a brief introduction to our field of practice and the longer version portrays more about the subtle and “invisible” skills that mental health nurses deploy in their everyday, care-face work.

We recruited five nurses at different stages in their careers to participate in the films. There is also a contribution from someone who has been a recipient of the care and interventions that mental health nurses provide.

This work builds on the RCN’s ambition to promote the image of nursing and is designed to have an appeal to a range of stakeholders and those within, and beyond, the family of nursing, including our partners in education and those considering joining the profession. It is the first step in the forum’s plan to use different media to capture and promote mental health nursing policy and practice issues at conferences and other events.

**Forum: RCN Children and Young People: Specialist Care Forum**

**Project: *RCN competences: an integrated career and competence framework for nurses working in the field of children and young people’s cancer care***

This publication provides a career framework for nurses working in paediatric oncology based on the skills they require – for example being able to administer cytotoxic drugs safely and caring for a child through the side effects of treatment. The framework encompasses Agenda for Change and the Knowledge and Skills Framework (KSF), and can be used by employers to identify training needs.

**Forum: RCN Forensic Nursing Forum**

**Project: *Conference – “Managing risk and liability”***

The forum delivered a full and varied programme to members at a conference on 25 March 2011 in Northern Ireland. The event was fully booked with over 50 delegates from a range of forensic settings and speakers from a broad range of disciplines – psychiatry, nursing, psychology, social work and criminal justice

Delegates were offered the chance to increase their knowledge and understanding of managing risk and liability when caring for people with mental illness and/or learning disabilities. The conference also served as an opportunity to raise the profile of forensic health care within Northern Ireland while offering networking opportunities for delegates. Feedback following the event was overwhelmingly positive.

**Forum: RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum****Project: *UK Vision Strategy***

Yvonne Needham, chair of the forum, has represented the forum on the UK Vision Strategy's Strategic Advisory Group. The aim of this work is to improve the eye health of people in the UK, eliminating avoidable sight loss, and supporting the independence of those with sight loss.

Forum steering committee members have also worked on various Vision 2020 projects this year, including developing extensive web-based guidance on eye care for the new clinical commissioning consortia, which will be introduced as part of the Coalition Government's NHS reforms.

**Forum: RCN Critical Care and In-Flight Nursing Forum****Project: *NHS early warning score system***

The forum collaborated with the Royal College of Physicians and the National Outreach Forum, to produce an online training package for clinicians on the new NHS early warning score system. This system enables more effective recognition of the early signs of patient deterioration.

Many trusts across the UK had developed their own early warning system (EWS) based on one published in 1997 by Richard Morgan, an intensivist from Great Yarmouth. A number of professional organisations met over the last two years to standardise the EWS and create a UK-wide tool that can be used by all acute trusts. The forum's involvement helped ensure that nurses had a voice in this extremely important topic.

The training package will cover all acute, ambulance and community trusts. It may also be used as a resource by nurses abroad.

**Forum: RCN Perioperative Forum****Project: *Standards for contingency management and delivery of critical care in a post anaesthesia care unit (PACU)***

When demand for critical care outstrips available human and material resources, there is a growing trend of using the operating department's recovery room as an interim venue for the care of newly critically ill adults. It is therefore of great importance that nursing staff receive the necessary training, education and skills to cope with these scenarios.

These standards have been developed with the RCN Perioperative Forum to inform the development of organisation-wide operational policy for the management of these patients and to help provide a clear and unambiguous framework for decision making.

The standards can be downloaded free of charge from the RCN website at [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications)



## Join a forum today

There are over thirty RCN Forums covering a wide variety of nursing specialties – from mental health to orthopaedics, district nursing to emergency care.

A list of the forums and more information can be found at [www.rcn.org.uk/forums](http://www.rcn.org.uk/forums)

All RCN members can join up to three forums for free. By joining a forum you will receive email newsletters on your specialty, plus you will also be eligible to apply to join the steering committee to get even more involved in developing professional practice with the RCN.

To join a forum, visit [www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn](http://www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn) or phone RCN Direct on **0345 772 6100**.

