

Impact Report 2021



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Introduction

As we write this, we are reflecting on 2021 as another extraordinary year for the nursing and midwifery professions. As the COVID-19 pandemic continued across the UK and beyond in 2021, our work to support and strengthen nursing and midwifery teams across the health and social care sectors remained our top priority.

Having quickly reorientated our work in 2020 so that we could provide emergency assistance to those in the professions hardest hit by the pandemic, we hoped that 2021 would become a year of trying to rebalance our work. It soon became clear that this was not to be the case.

Alongside our ambition to deliver on our long-term priorities, we realised that we would need to 'flex and pivot' in order to address the on-going challenges posed by the pandemic, not only for nursing and midwifery, but also for the RCN Foundation itself.

We faced challenges brought on by the pandemic that had an impact on our programmes, operations, and finances, at a time when nursing and midwifery staff needed us most. However, our firm commitment to nursing and midwifery, to the health and care sectors, and to patients, residents and their families, did not falter.

This *Impact Report* demonstrates many of the ways that we continued to support nursing and midwifery teams throughout 2021.



Introduction

We continued to provide a safety net through our benevolent grants, providing over £200k in funding to staff, increased clinical skills and expertise through our education grants, and funded projects that will not only advance our knowledge of the impact of the pandemic on nursing practice, but also improve the care of some of society's most vulnerable individuals.

During 2021, the work of our subsidiary charity, the COVID-19 Healthcare Support Appeal (CHSA), continued to deliver tangible benefit and impact for wider health and care staff affected by the pandemic. The charity, set up following a generous £5 million donation from TikTok, allocated the majority of its funding in grants to organisations working in health and social care. In 2021, the charity made grants totalling nearly £1.7 million to 20 organisations.

Since the start of the pandemic, more than 9,000 individuals have been supported. Having fulfilled the purpose for which it was established, the charity intends to close at the end of 2022.

There is no doubt that it has been a tough 12 months for everyone involved in health and care and that it will continue to be so for the foreseeable future. We will continue to support collective efforts to build the longer-term recovery and resilience of the health and care sectors, which is so vitally needed through the work that we do. It has never been more important to work together, and we can only look to the future with hope by doing so.

To all those who supported us this year, and made our work possible, we say a huge thank you. Your commitment and faith in us have

once again enabled us to deliver real benefit for nursing and midwifery across the UK, much of which you will read about in this *Impact Report*.

Finally, we would also like to thank all those we were able to support in some way over the last year – thank you for allowing us to be part of your journey.



Deepa Korea,
RCN Foundation
Director



**Professor Jane
Cummings CBE RN,**
Chair of the Board
of Trustees

Impact of your support

2021 saw the RCN Foundation directly support 1,085 nurses, midwives and health care support workers, in addition to the many hundreds of others impacted through the projects we funded.

We helped 961 members of the nursing team adapt to change or deal with pressures adversely affecting their financial situation, including many facing extreme hardship. Some of the biggest challenges these nurses, midwives and nursing support workers were facing included physical and mental ill-health, caring responsibilities, COVID-19 related problems, and unemployment. The Foundation awarded £200,000 in hardship grants in 2021, with a 96% satisfaction rate amongst clients for the grant issued to them.

We also supported the professional development and training of 97 individuals through education grants that totalled £149,000. Courses undertaken ranged from respiratory care and diabetes to mental health.

The Foundation is proud to have been able to offer assistance to nursing and midwifery professionals during what was a very turbulent year.

How our education grants make a difference

63% of respondents have taken on more responsibilities since completing the funded activity

26% have secured a new job

16% have moved up a band

95% stated that the funded activity had a positive impact on their career.

Our hardship provisions provided a lifeline



76% of clients felt more in control of their circumstances following their engagement with the team.



67% of clients who underwent assessment were potentially better off as a result.



87% of clients reported that they were satisfied following the appointment.



Our service identified **£1.63 million** in unclaimed benefits for clients.



The average financial gain for an individual given advice through a telephone assessment was **£6,000**.

Our continued response to the COVID-19 pandemic

At the start of 2021, it became apparent that the continuing challenges and additional strain of working on the frontline during the COVID-19 pandemic were exacerbating existing challenges faced by nursing and midwifery staff, including financial hardship, poor mental health and wellbeing, and workforce pressures.

COVID-19 Support Fund

Hardship grants totalling £22,000 were made to support nursing and midwifery staff who had been adversely affected due to the pandemic.

Education and training opportunities

The Foundation received a generous £300,000 donation from UK-based online food delivery business, Deliveroo, to establish the Deliveroo-RCN Foundation NHS Education Fund. The money was raised from donations from customers and partners in response to Deliveroo's COVID-19 'Supporting the NHS' campaign. The Fund was established to provide education and training opportunities for 200 nurses, midwives and health care support workers across the NHS and applications opened in spring 2022.



Funded projects

In response to the pandemic, the RCN Foundation undertook a review to identify the gaps in COVID-19 related research taking place. The aim of the review was to ascertain where the Foundation might best direct any funding relating to nursing-led COVID-19 research. This led to funding being provided for nursing-led research through open calls and details of these projects can be found in the pages that follow.

Funded project: Supporting people with learning disabilities during the pandemic

An urgent priority identified by the Foundation during the pandemic was addressing the disproportionately high numbers of people with learning disabilities who were dying from COVID-19. In response, the Foundation funded the CAREVIS study, a project between the University of Hertfordshire and the charity Beyond Words. The aim was to create a picture story book to provide those with learning difficulties with more information in pictures about receiving the COVID-19 vaccine.

As the book was being developed, it was important to include feedback from people with learning disabilities and their carers. The co-designed picture book was widely distributed to people with learning disabilities and those who care for them, including family and friends, paid carers, nurses, social workers, and other professionals who support them. The book has been published and is freely available on the Beyond Words website and the study will be completed in 2022.



University of Hertfordshire **UH**

Funded project: COVID-19 Leadership study

This study was carried out by Queen Margaret University in Scotland. The aim was to explore nurses' and midwives' perspectives and experiences of effective leadership strategies during the COVID-19 pandemic. The study will make recommendations for how healthy

practices could be incorporated into future nursing and midwifery leadership strategies beyond the pandemic. The study, which explores data from the four countries of the UK, will be completed in 2022.



Queen Margaret University
EDINBURGH

Funded project: Prioritising the mental health and wellbeing of nursing professionals

The Institute of Health Visiting (iHV) was awarded funding to support the mental health and emotional wellbeing of health visitors working in communities during the pandemic. Health visitors are trained nurses who typically visit people in their homes to assist the chronically ill or parents with very young children. These nursing professionals had reported feeling anxious due to the speed of change to their work, stressed by vastly increased caseloads, and were experiencing a reduced sense of professional self-worth.

The project resulted in the development of the Emotional Wellbeing at Work Programme which focused on the provision of psychological support to groups of health visitors in England, Scotland, Wales, and the Channel Isles. The virtual programme provided support to 58 health visitors from 13 different

organisations. In addition to online wellbeing sessions, a robust model of virtual emotional wellbeing support was designed to protect health visitors from chronic stress. Participants noted feeling more positive, supported and capable in their work environment.

One Health Visitor told us:

“I found the course instrumental in holding me up when I was wavering about my ability to do my job...the course empowered me to prioritise the wellbeing of those I care for as well as myself.”

This programme will continue to support the mental health and wellbeing of nursing and midwifery professional as the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic linger.





COVID-19 HEALTHCARE SUPPORT APPEAL (CHSA)

THE COVID-19 HEALTHCARE SUPPORT APPEAL WAS ESTABLISHED IN APRIL 2020 AS A SUBSIDIARY CHARITY OF THE RCN FOUNDATION. IT WAS SET UP FOLLOWING A GENEROUS £5M DONATION FROM TIKTOK WHICH SOUGHT TO PROVIDE FUNDING FOR HEALTH AND CARE STAFF AFFECTED BY THE PANDEMIC.

Providing grants to those who need it most

Grant priority areas were set out to ensure funding reached those who really needed it during the pandemic. These were:

Emergency aid and hardship

This included living costs for those unable to work due to self-isolation, particularly those on zero hours contracts, and paying for funeral costs for those who had died from COVID-19.

Psychological support

Funding for projects that offered tailored psychological support to health and social care staff who were experiencing the traumatic effects of working on the frontline.

Recovery and resilience

In recognition of the lasting impact that the pandemic is likely to have on the health and social care workforce, this priority offered funding for evidence-based projects that aimed to strengthen the workforce and bring about positive change in the sector.

Hardship grant recipient:

A community nurse who received a grant from the Queen's Nursing Institute

“The grant helped me significantly as my employer would not pay me my normal rate of pay whilst I was off sick with long COVID-19, so my wages decreased by £500 a month. The grant enabled us to cover essential bills, including mortgage payments, council tax, water rates, etc.

This meant I could concentrate on my recovery and not worry about money so much. It helped buy school uniforms when the children returned to school and paid for school meals.

Thank you so much.”

Grant-making activities

In 2021 the charity made grants totalling nearly £1.7m to 20 organisations. Since the start of the pandemic, more than 9,000 individuals have been supported.

Since the charity began its grant-making activities, £4,867,449 has been allocated to thirty organisations to help them support those working in the health and social care sector whose lives have been impacted by the pandemic.

Digital round table events

CHSA also hosted number of digital round table events for grant recipients around the charity's priority areas. During the second half of 2021, round tables took place on topics including psychological support, hardship and modern benevolence, peer-to-peer support, and recovery and resilience. A culture of sharing and learning evolved, which is vital for future resilience and demonstrated the impact of CHSA and its continued legacy.

**Psychological support grant
recipient:**

Kate O'Regan, Head of Business
Development, British Association of
Social Workers

“We have found the COVID-19 Healthcare
Support Appeal to be encouraging,
enabling and empowering.

We have enjoyed the round table
learning sessions and have been able
to continue to develop the services as
a result of our meetings with others
who are also concerned about helping
the professions and how COVID-19 has
impacted upon them.”

THANK YOU...

**Having fulfilled the purpose for which it
was established, the subsidiary charity
intends to close at the end of 2022.
We would like to thank TikTok for their
generous donation, as well as everyone
else who has donated to CHSA to support
health and social care professionals at a
time when it was most needed.**



Highlights from our nursing-led funded projects

Neurological Rehabilitation and Care

The Foundation provided funding to the University of Edinburgh to develop and launch the Postgraduate Certificate in Neurological Rehabilitation and Care, in partnership with the brain injury charity SameYou. 27 nurses enrolled on this programme, which aimed to make a tangible difference to the care of people with a brain injury. Participants on the course reported that there had been a significant positive impact on their personal and professional development, clinical knowledge and, by extension, the patient experience.

In addition, findings from the Young Adults Rehabilitation Needs

and Experiences following Stroke (YARNS) study led by the University of Edinburgh was published in 2021. This sought to scope the range of experiences of young adult stroke survivors aged 18 to 40 years old through their own stories, the published literature available in the field, and the formal and informal services available to support them. This work will be shared with health care professionals, educators, government and those who provide services to encourage evidence-based care and raise awareness amongst health and social care professionals of the needs of brain injury survivors in this age group as well as those who care for them.



**SAME
YOU**

**For brain injury
recovery**



Witches' Stories – righting a historical wrong

To celebrate the International Year of the Nurse and Midwife, the RCN Foundation awarded a Monica Baly History of Nursing grant to Edinburgh Napier University. The project aimed to explore the links between witchcraft, folk healing and modern nursing and midwifery.

Using archival documents, the team found that among 3,200 people accused of witchcraft in Scotland between 1563 and 1736, a portion practiced folk healing to tend to the

sick and to support women during childbirth.

The team collated their research to write biographies of these individuals, deepening understanding of specific midwifery and healing practices of the time. Thanks to this research, and the grant that funded it, the names of some early nurses and midwives accused of witchcraft are now known.

In November 2021, the project was featured during the Foundation's

Annual Lecture, entitled *Folk Healers and Midwives Accused of Witchcraft in Scotland 1563-1736*. Dr Nicola Ring, Nessa McHugh and Rachel Davidson-Welch from Edinburgh Napier University discussed their investigation of the stories of individual nurses and midwives who had been accused of witchcraft and reflected on their practices from today's health care perspective. The lecture attracted over 400 attendees and was the RCN Foundation's most popular annual lecture to date.



Supporting individual members of the nursing and midwifery team

Layla's Story

"The bursary has enhanced my practice as a midwife and provided a crucial step in my progression towards becoming an independent researcher."

Layla, Research Midwife

Layla was granted £1,975 towards the completion of "The Practice of Evidence-Based Health Care" – a Master's level module undertaken through the University of Oxford's Continuing Education Department. This course enabled Layla to learn how to evaluate the quality of different types of research studies in a systematic way and apply this knowledge to clinical scenarios and decision making.

Since completing the module Layla has presented at several study days run by the charity Action on Pre-eclampsia. The knowledge

“

she gained from the evidence-based practice module was crucial in helping her to develop these presentations.



Layla was able to secure funding to undertake a full Master's degree. The award gave her the confidence to apply for a pre-doctoral fellowship and she has now been encouraged to apply for a doctoral fellowship with the National Institute for Health Research (NIHR). The course motivated Layla to pursue further academic study and to take on greater responsibility as a researcher. "The RCN Foundation grant enabled me to obtain a Master's degree and proved a catalyst for further opportunities. I would strongly encourage anyone thinking of applying to go for it."

Helping Hands Scheme

In 2021, the Foundation piloted a new buddying scheme to support applicants through the grant application process. Previous successful applicants were partnered with those applying for funding and were able to offer support and advice.

A key finding was that the scheme successfully increased applications from ethnic minority professionals seeking funding. The scheme will be fully rolled out in 2022.

Layla went on to win the Trevor Clay Professional Bursary Scheme Award which was presented at the RCN Foundation Virtual Impact Awards 2021 by Professor Jacqueline Dunkley-Bent, OBE, Chief Midwifery Officer for NHS England, and Trustee of the RCN Foundation.

Hannah's Story



"I will be forever grateful for the help I was given."

Hannah*, Nursing Support Worker

Hannah had been a nursing support worker for a number of years before she became pregnant at the height of the pandemic. As she was on the frontline, she soon had to stop working to keep both her and her baby safe. She was terrified about how she would be able to pay the bills and provide for her child, without putting themselves at risk.

After reaching out to our hardship service, Hannah had a phone interview and was awarded a Hardship Grant of £1,000 to pay for items required for her baby. She says: "The support was unbelievable; it means the whole world. I was given help when I needed it the most."

*Different name used for anonymity

James' Story



"It will give me a sense of accomplishment and pride to forever have my name associated with the RCN Foundation." **James, Nurse**



James was awarded a grant of £7,500 over three years to undertake an MA in Adult Nursing at the University of Salford. Having previously worked in the music industry, James decided to pursue a career in nursing after a life-changing experience volunteering at a government hospital in Sierra Leone.

During the clinical placements on his course, he was exposed to a wide variety of nursing specialties and developed a greater understanding of the nursing process. James received a Distinction upon completion of his course and now works in the Acute Medical Unit at St George's Hospital. James hopes eventually to become a nurse consultant in emergency medicine. In the future, he would like to undertake a Master's degree in Advanced Clinical Practice, having already worked as a charge nurse.

"The bursary has greatly alleviated some of the financial pressure of returning to education. Once you're a nurse, you're a nurse all day, every day. I can't imagine not being that."

Dr Ruth May, Chief Nursing Officer for England, presented James with the Margaret Parkinson Award at the RCN Foundation Virtual Impact Awards 2021 for outstanding achievement in student nursing.

Leave a gift in your will, or remember a loved one

Since the Foundation was established in 2010, our work has made a real and direct impact on the lives of thousands of nurses, midwives and nursing support workers, and consequently on the lives of patients, right across the UK.

An In Memory gift or legacy in your Will to the RCN Foundation will enable us to support members of the nursing community in times of hardship and will empower nurses, midwives and health care support workers with learning and development opportunities, improving patient care for years to come.

By choosing to remember us, you will be helping us to provide support to members of the nursing team when they need it most. After you have provided for your loved ones, if you are in a position to support future generations of nurses and midwives please do get in touch by:

emailing rcnfoundation@rcn.org.uk
or by calling **020 7647 3622**

Dame Sheila Quinn

The late Dame Sheila Quinn, Fellow and former President of the Royal College of Nursing, decided to leave a gift in her will to support the RCN Foundation's work.



The future of nursing meant so much to her and she felt this was a way in which she could help upcoming generations of nurses. Through the Foundation's education and hardship grants, nursing-led research projects and work to raise the profile of nurses and midwives, Dame Sheila has invested in the future of nursing and made a lasting impact.

Thank you to all our supporters in 2021

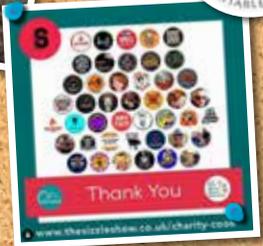
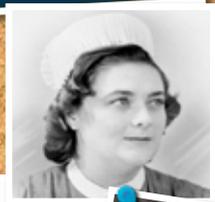
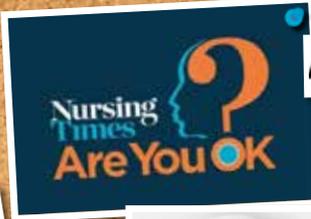


We are extraordinarily grateful to each and every individual, team and organisation who have supported us during the year. With their vital help, we have been able to continue to achieve our purpose of supporting and strengthening nursing and midwifery to improve the health and wellbeing of the public.

Every donation we receive, whether big or small, enables us to make a real difference to the lives of hundreds of nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers, and through them patients, residents, their families and communities.

Thank you





We want to hear from you.

Feel free to contact us and see how we can help:

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 @RCNFoundation

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Texts will cost the donation amount plus one standard network rate message.



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