



Impact Report 2023

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Introduction

It's been another incredibly busy and exciting year for the RCN Foundation – the challenges facing nursing and midwifery, coupled with the economic climate, has meant our services were needed more than ever.

Our impact, influence, and reputation continued to grow in 2023, a year in which we became an award-winning charity!

Our Benevolent Service saw an increase in demand across 2023. Nevertheless, we continued to make a positive difference to vulnerable nursing and midwifery staff. As part of our benevolent offer, all applicants completed a benefits checker and, as a result, were on average better off by £10,631 per annum. Overall, we awarded £200,000 worth of grants

benefitting 514 nurses, midwives, and healthcare support workers. The RCN Foundation remains the leading charity in the sector to provide education and learning grants to nurses, midwives and HCSW. In 2023, we supported 110 professionals through £160,247 in education grants. The majority of the grants were awarded to those practising at Bands 6 & 7 who were undertaking the research pillar of advanced practice programmes. As a result of the education they had undertaken with the grant, 86% reported that it has enhanced the quality of person-centred care they provide and 64% reported positive feedback from patients regarding the care they had received.

In 2023, three of our projects came to an end. One was our partnership with the IMPACT Foundation in Bangladesh. During the partnership seven student nurses qualified and, despite the challenges presented by

the pandemic, all seven now practise nursing in their locality.

In October, during Black History Month, we launched the Michelle Cox RCN Foundation Anti Racism Award, an annual grant to support a nursing or midwifery-led project which aims to oppose racism and promote racial equality within nursing and midwifery.

During the year, we worked on the development of a Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing, the first of its kind in the UK. Through this initiative, we made a significant financial commitment of £700,000 to support and strengthen social care nursing over the next five years. At our annual lecture in November, which featured a dynamic 'Question Time' style panel discussion and debate on critical aspects of adult social care nursing, we were thrilled to announce that the University of Salford had been awarded the funding to host the Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing.

Introduction

For the Foundation, this important initiative marks the legacy for our programme of support for social care nursing implemented over the past eight years.

A highlight of our year was receiving recognition for [Here for Life](#), the joint campaign between the RCN Foundation, and the UK and Ireland Chief Nursing Officers, which won two awards. In July, the campaign won 'Highly Commended' in the Charitable Campaign of the Year category at the prestigious Communique Awards.

And at the PM Society Digital Awards in September, we went one better and won gold in the 'Healthcare Charities, Patient Associations and The NHS' category. Here for Life was described by one of the judges as “an

outstanding campaign” that changed “behaviour and perception around the work that nurses do”.

To all those who supported us this year, we say a huge thank you. Your financial commitment and faith in us have enabled us to deliver real impact and lasting change for nursing, midwifery, and patient care across the UK.

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.

Read on to find out how you can help to make a positive difference to the lives of nursing and midwifery staff across the nation, and therefore improve the health and wellbeing of the public.



Deepa Korea
RCN Foundation Director



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

Impact of your support

How we helped in 2023

2023 saw the Foundation directly support 624 nurses, midwives, and healthcare support workers, through the award of hardship and educational grants in addition to the many hundreds of others impacted through the projects we funded.

We helped 514 members of the nursing and midwifery teams adapt to change or deal with pressures adversely affecting their financial situation, including many facing extreme hardship. Some of the biggest challenges they were facing related to cost of living, physical and mental ill-health, caring responsibilities, and unemployment.



514

**nurses, midwives and
healthcare support workers
were awarded grants**



£22,698,479

**identified in unclaimed
benefits for clients by our
hardship service**

YOUR SUPPORT IN NUMBERS

Overall, 2,135

**individuals received
signposting support from
the service**

**Individuals who accessed a
benefits estimate were, on
average, better off by**

£10,631 per annum

We supported the professional development and training of 110 individuals through education grants that totalled £160,247. Funding was granted for a wide range of education activities, from one-off courses in a particular clinical specialism, to Masters' modules and funding for PhDs.

HOW OUR EDUCATION GRANTS MAKE A DIFFERENCE



110

nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers were awarded education grants

64%

had received positive patient feedback because of the funded activity



86%

reported that the grant had enhanced holistic, evidence based, patient-centred care



50%

said that they were more likely to stay in their current career



86%

stated that they had increased competence

Supporting individual members of the nursing and midwifery team

The Foundation continued to deliver a significant portfolio of education grants throughout 2023. During the year, £160,247 in education grants was awarded to 110 individuals.



The **Into Nursing grant** for graduates seeking a career in nursing remained ever popular. This targeted financial support will help five nurses financially during their studies and create the next generation of nursing professionals. Five grants were awarded totalling £27,500.

The **RCN Foundation Leathersellers' grant** provided grants to non-mental health registered nurses and midwives who were supporting children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing within their areas of clinical practice. Eight nurses and midwives benefited from this grant, totalling £11,154.

The **RCN Foundation Olufunke Adeyeye Education grant** was established for nurses, midwives and HCSWs from the global majority to undertake education and development activities. One grant was awarded in 2023, totalling £1,600.



Olufunke Adeyeye



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The **RCN Foundation Worshipful Company of Needle-makers grant**

saw eight nurses and midwives being awarded £6,785 in total. The purpose of this grant is to support nurses and midwives who are looking to enhance the use of needles in their practice.

There were two specific grants programmes for healthcare support workers in 2023. These awards are so important in ensuring healthcare support workers can make progress in a career they love, caring for patients, and making a lasting difference to healthcare across the UK.

The **RCN Foundation LV= Education Grant** was launched on Nursing Support Workers' Day on 23 November. Eight HCSWs benefitted from a training and development grant through this fund, totalling £10,090.

The **RCN Foundation Kershaw Fund**, available to healthcare support workers looking to develop their professional skills, provided an education grant to three healthcare support workers and the total amount was £1,020.

Two new education grant funds were introduced in 2023 following new donations. **DKMS UK** donated £30,000 to the RCN Foundation to establish a 3-year education grant for UK nurses working in, or wishing to study, oncology and haematology.

A second education grant was established following a donation from the **Gresham Benevolent Fund** aimed at nurses working in London Hospitals. In 2023 we funded five nurses at £500, totalling £2,500.

Adeboye's Story

“We can create a more compassionate future.”

Adeboye is a healthcare support worker and was the recipient of the RCN Foundation Kershaw education grant. In 2023, he was awarded an Impact Award in recognition of his work.

Thank you for recognising the importance of healthcare support workers and their dedicated efforts. This award reminds us of our collective responsibility in creating a compassionate and dignified healthcare environment.

With the support of the RCN Foundation, I am confident that together we can create a brighter and more compassionate future for the healthcare sector.



Fartun's Story

“I now feel more confident in making decisions.”

Fartun received an Into Nursing grant that supported her to become a newly qualified nurse focusing on helping those with mental illness. With our support, she was able to focus on her academic studies and complete placements working with people with drug and alcohol problems. Fartun feels the support allowed her to grow and develop as a person and she now feels her role allows her to make an impact everyday and that seeing a patient progress in their recovery journey is the best part of her new career. She was inspired to take this route based on her personal experience of having a mental illness.

Having an admission and then being discharged into the community under the early intervention service made her passionate about helping people who have mental illness and support them and their families.



Crystal's Story

“

“I almost can't believe it, but I absolutely love it.”

Crystal started living independently at the age of 16 in her own home in Manchester. She worked as a healthcare assistant taking care of the elderly but knew she wanted to achieve more and progressed to become a nursing associate.

With the support of the RCN Foundation, Crystal was able to challenge herself professionally and study towards an Adult Nursing BSc at Manchester Metropolitan University. Crystal has progressed to a full BSc and has now secured a post on the ICU unit at the Manchester Hospital.

Receiving the support made Crystal believe in herself as before she didn't think it would be something that was achievable for her. She is the first in her family to attend university.



Laura's Story

“

“If I had not received this support from the RCN Foundation, I would have been unable to undertake this further study.”

I will always be grateful to the RCN foundation for their support. I now proudly wear my Alumni badge and I look forward to sharing this experience with others within practice.

I am now in my dream education role, and it is due to me completing my MSc. The research I undertook showed that nurses do not engage with further study due to financial pressures, organisations like the RCN Foundation are vital for nurses like me! I am so grateful.



Hardship grants

In 2023 we supported 514 members of the nursing and midwifery workforce facing hardship – we awarded a total of £200,000 in hardship grants to help with a range of challenges including cost of living, physical, mental ill health and caring responsibilities.

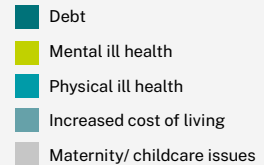
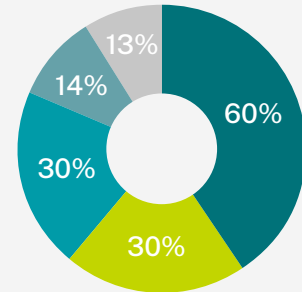
Grant recipients have been able to pay for essential household costs, and one-off costs such as a washing machine, fridge, cooker and car repairs. Other needs included food, rent and utility arrears. Meeting these essential costs relieves a huge amount of stress, worry and anxiety which reduces the risk of poor health developing, existing ill health being



exacerbated, and restoring a sense of dignity.

The collaboration between the Foundation and [PayPlan](#) has proven to be highly beneficial, offering individuals free access to regulated debt advice. In total, 2,135 individuals received signposting support through this service, underscoring its significant outreach and assistance in managing debt-related challenges.

Top 5 presenting issues for seeking hardship grants in 2023



*Please note that each applicant may have multiple presenting issues



42%

of those who currently work or may be working in the future say the service has helped or will help them to improve patient care.



88%

said the grant had a positive effect on their mental health.

OUR LONG TERM IMPACT



22%

of those able to work said the grant has assisted, or will assist, in getting back to nursing or midwifery work.



88%

said the grant and any signposting received helped them to feel more in control of their situation.

Amelia's Story



“Your support has been life changing and helped me keep doing the job I love.”

The last few years have been extremely difficult. I experienced domestic and financial abuse three years ago which resulted in me leaving my home with my newborn baby. I was left in a considerable amount of debt, and I didn't have any savings to fall back on, so struggled to pay for childcare fees.

I applied to the RCN Foundation's benevolent fund to help with costs and upfront childcare fees so I could go back to work. Receiving the grant allowed me to get back on my feet. I've since returned to work and have recently been promoted to a band 7 nurse practitioner. This wouldn't have been possible without the support of the RCN Foundation. I am incredibly grateful to be able to continue my career which I enjoy and provide for my daughter. Being back at work has also helped me to clear any debt that I was left with.

Emily's Story



“I'll be forever grateful for the help and support I received.”

I am a mum to four young children and have always worked as a nurse full time. I have a limited support network and I was struggling financially to meet bills and childcare, which meant I had to reduce my hours at work. I had my youngest child in February this year and was only entitled to statutory maternity pay meaning my pay was cut by £1,500 per month.

I never imagined that as a nurse, I wouldn't be in a position to financially support my family. As a single mum with limited family and network, I found myself struggling mentally and financially. I applied to the RCN Foundation benevolent fund and the grant has meant I was able to buy my newborn a cot, a new bed for my other children and a new washing machine without leaving me in any additional debt. I feel less stressed, my mental health has improved, and my children can live more comfortably.

I'll be forever grateful for the help and support I received, it's made a big difference to my family life and I'm so happy – thank you.





Highlights from our nursing- and midwifery-led funded projects

In 2023, the Foundation funded a number of nursing- and midwifery-led projects. In total 3 studies and projects completed in 2023. These were:

The Huddersfield Application for Mental Health Assessment (HAMHA)

The work on the children and young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing grant programme, which focused on the development of a toolkit, continued during 2023. The University of Huddersfield undertook further quality assurance testing on the Huddersfield Application for Mental Health Assessment (HAMHA) app across Northern Ireland, South-West Yorkshire and as far afield as Australia. Feedback demonstrated that the App had a significant impact on children and young people, with direct feedback from one family that the intervention had saved their child's life.

RCN Libraries The Mary Abbott Project: Sharing nurses' life stories through their archives

This project aimed to support researchers to find the collections in the RCN archive which illustrated exactly how British nurses contributed to the wider world of international nursing in leadership, research, and policy contexts and through direct healthcare delivery overseas. The project included a launch event which featured eminent speakers on the topic of international nursing, including Howard Catton and Barbara Stilwell.



The IMPACT Foundation: Funding for the training of seven student nurses in Bangladesh

Seven students undertook a three-year Diploma in Nursing Science and Midwifery which is approved by, and affiliated to, Bangladesh's Nursing Council (BNC). Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, all seven students graduated from the Institute, and will practice within the locality. Much of the funding for the project was raised by Cecilia Anim during her tenure as RCN President from 2015-2018.

Other highlights include:

First Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing in the UK

Following a robust selection process, the Foundation awarded a grant to the University of Salford to host the first Chair in Adult Social Care Nursing in the UK. The Chair will be supported by a postdoctoral research assistant to undertake and translate research into clinical practice and to develop the evidence-base upon which the next generation of adult social care nurses can drive social care nursing practice forward. The Chair, who will be appointed in 2024, will be research active with a role in teaching and learning, and maintain currency of clinical nursing practice in adult social care.

The Foundation delivered the **Amin Abdullah RCN Foundation Grant** programme for the second year. One of the two projects selected in 2022 was

also completed in 2023. This project investigated the effect of a multi-dimensional intervention programme on nursing students' self-efficacy, engagement, and wellbeing at Canterbury Christ Church University.

One student reported that participating in the project transformed her life

Many nursing students reported improved self-confidence and emotional intelligence, giving them a sense of better wellbeing. One student reported that participating in the project transformed her life in that it solved the key source of her stress, resulting in a considerable reduction in her stress levels and liberation from a chaotic and depressing everyday life.

Kings Fund and RCN Foundation Follow your Compassion

During the year, we worked in partnership once again with The King's Fund to support the delivery of Follow Your Compassion, a companion study to the Courage of Compassion (2020). The *Courage of Compassion* was a seminal report by The King's Fund commissioned by the Foundation, which demonstrated the importance of Compassionate Leadership to support the mental health and wellbeing of nurses, midwives and healthcare support workers at work, through minimising workplace stress. This ultimately supports high quality patient care and enhances retention rates within the professions.

Follow Your Compassion sought to review the lived experience of newly qualified nurses and midwives and the reality of the culture of work they stepped into post qualifying, to establish how embedded in practice

compassionate leadership had become. 22 newly registered nurses and midwives working in the NHS across the UK took part.

In October, together with The King's Fund, we facilitated an event in which the participants shared their experiences with senior nurse leaders. The event made for stark listening, as the newly qualified nurses and midwives described their experiences of harmful workplace cultures full of anxiety, judgement, incivility, exhaustion, excessive workloads, staffing shortages and inconsistent student experiences. The project has highlighted that the newly qualified experience is a very long way from how senior leaders would like it to be, and that much of the 'noise' around compassionate leadership in health care is just that. It is clear to us that action is vital if we are to begin to address the exodus of thousands of newly qualified nurses over the last five years (NMC, 2022).





In 2023, the Foundation launched the **Michelle Cox RCN Foundation Anti-Racism Award**. Michelle is a Black registered nurse of 25 years from Liverpool who was employed by the NHS and was based in Manchester. She made the decision to blow the whistle on poor practice in her service across the North of England, submitting a grievance which included discrimination by her manager. Dissatisfied with the way her complaints of racism were handled, and certain she had been mistreated for whistleblowing, Michelle took her employer to industrial tribunal and won a landmark racial discrimination case. Determined to create a positive legacy from her experience, Michelle

worked with the RCN Foundation to create an award that aimed to support nursing and midwifery staff to tackle anti-racism.

The annual grant will support a nurse or midwifery-led project which aims to oppose racism and promote racial equality within the professions. The grant programme was launched in October, to coincide with Black History Month. Following a robust application and selection process, the first grant was awarded at the end of 2023. The grant recipient will be undertaking this work across 2024.



CHSA closure

The COVID-19 Healthcare Support Appeal (CHSA) was created in 2020 as a result of a £5 million donation from TikTok, the global video sharing company.



The donation was used to provide grants to health and care workers affected by the pandemic and focused on three areas of support: emergency aid and hardship; psychological support; and recovery and resilience. Having fulfilled its purpose, CHSA was closed during 2023, and removed from the registers of the Charity Commission and Companies House. During the time that CHSA was operational, it provided grants totalling £4,867,447 to 30 organisations in the health and social care sectors. In total, the grants directly supported over 10,800 individuals. An independent evaluation

was commissioned to review the impact of CHSA and was carried out by Arc Research and Consultancy.

The report concluded that CHSA's grants had reduced pandemic-related psychological impact; strengthened the workforce; improved leadership; and eased financial pressures for healthcare workers. The evaluation report was launched at a reception in the House of Lords hosted by Baroness Watkins.

CHSA provided grants totalling

£4,867,447

to 30 organisations in the health and social care sectors

10,800

individuals were directly supported by the CHSA grants

Thank you to all our supporters

We are extraordinarily grateful to each and every individual, team and organisation who have supported us during 2023.

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, makes a real difference to the lives of hundreds of nurses, midwives, and healthcare support workers, and through them, patients, and families. Thank you.





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