



**RCN
BULLETIN**



Royal College
of Nursing

WELLBEING APP FOR NURSING STAFF
P8 FEATURE

HOW TO USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO
PROGRESS YOUR CAREER
P9 FEATURE

HELPING OLDER PEOPLE GET ACTIVE
P14 FORUM FOCUS

ISSUE NO. 371 JANUARY 2019

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OF A NEW LAW IN HER ROLE AS RCN PRESIDENT



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Nursing staff recognised in New Year honours

RCN members are among many nursing professionals to appear on the list for 2019



Professor Jane Cummings (pictured above) has been awarded a CBE (Commander of the British Empire) for services to nursing and the NHS. The former Chief Nursing Officer for England introduced a number of programmes including the 6Cs for nursing (care, compassion, competence, communication, courage and commitment) and the national framework for nursing, midwifery and care staff.

Claire Murdoch, Chief Executive of Central and North West London NHS Foundation Trust, which continues to care for survivors of the Grenfell Tower fire, also received a CBE as did Birmingham Women's and Children's NHS Foundation Trust's Chief Nursing Officer Michelle McLoughlin.

Two nurses, Joy Ongcachuy and Emma Senyard, who work at Barts Health NHS Trust in London, received OBEs (Order of the British Empire) in recognition of their work treating people during the London Bridge terrorist attack in June 2017.

Professor Brian Dolan has also been awarded an OBE. His 2016 talk inspired the campaign #EndPJPParalysis to get patients moving, improving recovery and discharge rates. Queen's Nursing Institute Trustee David Foster joins Brian in receiving an OBE for his services to

nursing and midwifery as does Cynthia Williams for her services to nursing and the community.

Twelve nursing professionals were awarded an MBE (Member of the British Empire) for their outstanding achievement or service to the community. They include Ruth Oshikanlu, who was made a Fellow of the RCN in 2017, and RCN Nurse of the Year Melanie Davies, a ward sister with Abertawe Bro Morgannwg University Health Board at Morriston Hospital in Swansea.

The British Empire Medal, which is awarded for hands-on service to the local community has been given to five nurses: Elizabeth Bainbridge, Kathleen Dawson, Jennifer Ladd, Anne Brown Russell and Janine McKnight-Cowan.

Lt Col Jayne Cumming and Sgt Colodia Muzvidziwa, both of Queen Alexandra's Royal Army Nursing Corps, received the Royal Red Cross.

Dame Professor Donna Kinnair, Acting RCN Chief Executive, said: "Nurses constantly go the extra mile to give the best possible care for their patients. They don't do this in the hope of attracting plaudits, but I'm sure they will be pleased to receive this important public recognition."

RCN turns focus on sustainability in 2019



The RCN's *Small Changes, Big Differences* campaign is expanding to include the importance of sustainability in nursing practice.

The campaign, which has run for nearly four years, has so far promoted the value and impact of nursing staff getting involved with sourcing and buying items used in health care. But what's bought needs to be disposed of, so there's

a natural link to sustainability and the campaign's focus is now shifting to reducing plastics, with the RCN keen to hear from members who are doing just that.

Helen Dunn is lead nurse for infection control at Great Ormond Street Hospital, where they've reduced the amount of gloves used by an average of 36,000 pairs a week. This followed their *Gloves*

Are Off campaign, which saw staff being trained to improve their understanding of when gloves were necessary and when they weren't.

"I think staff had got in the habit of thinking that they had to wear gloves to administer any medication," says Helen. "When we showed them the amount we were using, it helped them to see the bigger picture, which you're not always aware of when you're working on a ward."

The saving from using less gloves equates to around £1,000 a week. Over a year, it equates to nine and a half tons less plastic.

"We'd love to hear ideas for reducing plastic waste from all RCN members, including registered and unregistered nursing staff and students," says Rose Gallagher, RCN Professional Lead for Infection Prevention and Control. You can share your sustainability success story at rcn.org.uk/small-changes/sustainability and join the conversation on Twitter using [@SmallChanges @theRCN](https://twitter.com/SmallChanges)

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We'd love to hear your ideas

Did you notice?

RCN Bulletin has ditched its plastic wrapping and switched to recyclable paper envelopes. Do your bit for the environment by opting out of your print issue at rcn.org.uk/go-green

🕒 Turn to page 6 to find out how one member is making her operating theatre more sustainable.

Find out about changes to practice-based learning

The RCN is holding a series of regional workshops from January to March where you can find out more about new NMC standards for education and how they affect you. The standards were launched last May and include a change to the way nursing students' work is overseen and signed off in clinical settings. Mentors and sign-off mentors will be replaced by practice supervisors, practice assessors and academic assessors. Find out more at rcn.org.uk/ren-workshops

Have you been supported by an amazing RCN rep?

Then put them forward to receive an RCN award before the deadline of 1 February. Nominations are open for you to show your appreciation for outstanding stewards, learning reps, safety reps and student information officers. If you know someone who has made a real difference in your workplace or university, then nominate them at rcn.org.uk/rcnawards. Nominations are also open for RCN Fellowships and Awards of Merit.



Ballot prepared in Northern Ireland

As *RCN Bulletin* went to press, preparations were underway to ballot members working for the Health and Social Care Service on taking industrial action over pay. It's after the joint health trade unions rejected a formal pay offer announced by the Department of Health. The offer fell significantly short of the 3% pay rise the RCN was seeking for its members. It also denied many nursing staff the incremental pay progression they're contractually entitled to.

RCN Northern Ireland Director Janice Smyth said: "This pay announcement must be viewed in the context of the growing pay gap between Northern Ireland and the other countries of the UK, where three-year pay deals have been agreed." Visit rcn.org.uk/northernireland to find out more.

Safe staffing success in Scotland

The Scottish Parliament has voted in favour of the general principles of the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill at the stage one debate. During the debate members of the Scottish Parliament (MSPs) from across the political spectrum reflected the RCN's key messages in their speeches.

Conservative MSP Miles Briggs relayed conversations the RCN has had with him about the importance of a strong professional nursing voice in decisions about staffing for safe and effective care. Labour members emphasised the need for a safe working environment.

The Liberal Democrat health spokesperson Alex Cole-Hamilton MSP recounted quotes from RCN members about the difference legislation would make. MSPs from the SNP and Green parties backed the RCN's call for senior charge nurses and their community counterparts to be non-caseload holding.

The bill will now progress to stage two for scrutiny before moving to stage three when parliament will meet to debate and vote on the issue. Visit rcn.org.uk/askformore

New year, new RCN Council

The new year brings new leadership at the RCN, with a governing Council made up of members recently elected to represent you.

RCN Council consists of one representative each from Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and one from each of England's nine regions. It also includes one person to represent health practitioner members and one to represent student members. The RCN President, Deputy President and Chair of RCN Congress also have seats on Council.

Council provides strategic leadership and direction for the RCN. Its Chair, Vice Chair and Honorary Treasurer will be elected from within it soon.

The most recent elections were held because 12 Council members decided to stand down mid-term following an Extraordinary General Meeting at which the majority of RCN members who voted signalled no confidence in the leadership provided by Council at the time.

This was in response to the RCN's handling of the NHS pay deal for England



**LEAD
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in which members were given inaccurate information about how the deal would be implemented in the first year. Members recently elected to fill these casual vacancies will do so on one-year terms.

The RCN President, Deputy President, Chair of RCN Congress, Student Member of Council and Eastern Region Council Member have also been elected in the past six months.

For a full list of Council members, see box below.

Your RCN Council members are:

Northern Ireland – Ann Marie O'Neill [newly elected for a one-year term]

Scotland – Geoff Earl [newly elected for a one-year term]

Wales – Richard Jones MBE [re-elected uncontested for a one-year term]

East Midlands – Deirdre Sissons [newly elected for a one-year term]

Eastern – Janice Waters [elected in October for a part-term until 31 December 2019]

London – Cynthia Davis [re-elected for a one-year term]

Northern – Trevor Peel [re-elected for a one-year term]

North West – Dave Dawes [re-elected for a one-year term]

South East – Heather Mercer [newly elected for a one-year term]

South West – Geoffrey Walker [newly elected for a one-year term]

West Midlands – Sue Warner [re-elected for a one-year term]

Yorkshire and the Humber – Carol Popplestone [re-elected for a one-year term]

Health Practitioner – Evan Keir [newly elected for a one-year term]

Student – Amy Fancourt [elected in December for a two-year term]

RCN President – Anne Marie Rafferty [elected in November for a two-year term]

RCN Deputy President – Yvonne Coghill [elected in November for a two-year term]

Chair of RCN Congress – BJ Waltho [elected in July for a two-year term]

Email governance.support@rcn.org.uk to be put in touch with your RCN Council member or visit rcn.org.uk/council to find out more.

THE VIEW FROM HERE



Harriet Dean-Orange
Senior theatre nurse

Operating theatres are not the easiest places to try to create sustainable environments. I first became aware of the issues more than four years ago, when I began working as a scrub nurse. I remember seeing all the bags of waste piled up, with hardly anything recycled.

Since then, we've made progress, but there's still scope to do much more. Among the changes I'm proudest of is stopping the use of polystyrene cups and throwaway cutlery – the cups alone cost our department £7,000 a year. You wouldn't use these at home, so why at work? Today, staff bring in their own mugs and happily show them off.

We also recycle where we can. We have replaced our plastic waste containers with a cheaper biodegradable version and cut our water usage dramatically. Now we use an alcohol-based solution to clean hands, where once the hot water tap would have been running for at least five minutes.

Of course there are those who are sceptical. You have to keep going and find ways that will engage them. I've found that doom and gloom doesn't work. But when people are educated and knowledgeable, they will decide to make changes themselves.

At the moment, if you need an operation the resources are there – but in 50 years' time or less that won't be the case. We need to start turning it around, before it's too late.

rcn.org.uk/small-changes



What you've been saying

There's still time to get the flu vaccine

After years of not having the flu vaccine, on Christmas Eve in 2017 I started to feel unwell with what I thought was a cold. By Boxing Day I was bed-ridden for a week with a further week off sick. I have never felt so ill. It was full-blown flu!

I returned to work and had my vaccine. I am truly converted even though I never had a reasonable excuse or reason why I didn't want it. I could not agree more with the advice from the RCN to have the vaccine.

f Sarah Elliot-Latham on Facebook

Students struggling

It is such a very sad state of affairs to be a nation which does not have the foresight to invest in the education of its young to provide health, education, arts and science, etc. Instead we burden our future citizens

with debt and then have the temerity to expect growth, development and prosperity.

f Gerrie Whitney on Facebook

What was wrong with the old way?

I truly feel sorry for any student nurse in 21st century education. Gone are the days of paid training. No worries about paying fees, rent, working part-time jobs to buy food. Instead we lived on site, the old-fashioned nurses home, mates all around you. A pay cheque every month. Two weeks paid holidays on average every 10 weeks. We worked hard on the wards, an integral part of the team giving hands-on care and learning at every stage. We moaned of course, but one thing we never worried about was money. We were never going to be rich, but we left at the end of three years with a qualification valued the world over.

f Mike Whelan on Facebook



QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Together we must raise the profile of nursing, bust the myths about it, and work to encourage and promote equality of race and gender across the profession and nursing education

Amy Fancourt, newly elected student member of RCN Council

FOUR THINGS TO DO IN JANUARY

1. Write to your MP urging them to waive the £400 immigration health surcharge for nursing staff from outside the European Economic Area: rcn.org.uk/immigration-health-surcharge
2. Join our campaign to fund our future nurses: rcn.org.uk/fundourfuture
3. Opt out of the print issue of *RCN Bulletin* at rcn.org.uk/go-green and read it online: rcn.org.uk/bulletin
4. Download the NURSING YOU wellbeing app and get ideas on staying healthy in 2019: rcn.org.uk/nursing-you

GOT SOMETHING TO SAY?

The *RCN Bulletin* team is always looking for members to contribute to the opinion pages. If you're keen to share your views, email bulletin@rcn.org.uk

HOT TOPIC



We asked members, what's your nursing goal for 2019?

To inspire and motivate others to make a difference to patient care and experience and remain passionate about our profession. **Debbie Quinn**

My goal is to make sure that public health nursing is represented and that all public health nurses are valued for their contribution to improving people's health. This is my last year as Chair of the RCN Public Health Forum and I will work hard to ensure that the forum continues to grow and build on its successes over the last few years, ensuring a smooth handover to the next chair. **Jason Warriner**

To become the best nursing associate I can be when I join the Nursing and Midwifery Council register. Showing nursing associates in a positive light and paving the way for a new generation of nursing staff. **Luke Smith**

My goal is for nurses to unite to save the NHS from chronic underfunding and privatisation – even if we have to strike. Because the greater good is the survival of the NHS, and the lives of patients and staff. I know everyone is tired, but we can do it. There are more of us than any other profession – the NHS couldn't work without us. The NHS unites us. It employs every colour and creed. It stands for fairness and kindness and compassion. It makes us all proud. Let's save it. **Karen Chilver**

To ensure nurses continue to lead the fight against human trafficking and to work more with our international counterparts to effect real change. **Lou Cahill**

Be even more active and build on the Nursing Now England campaign, bringing nurses to the forefront of policy-making. Continue to remove stigma for men in nursing to transform the perceptions of nursing. **Charlotte Hall**

MESSAGE TO MEMBERS



Donna Kinnair Acting RCN Chief Executive

The new year brings new leadership at the RCN. Members have been elected to prominent roles within the College and I want to welcome and support them to achieve what they set out in their manifestos. This included improving member engagement, recruiting more RCN reps, more heavily influencing government and improving pay, terms and conditions for nursing staff. They're admirable aims and ones that I support. They also come from a deep mutual desire to make the RCN the best it can possibly be.

We have new Council members and I'd like to reiterate their importance and yours in the running of the College. The RCN is your union, run by members for members. In being elected to RCN Council those members have pledged to represent your needs. Their purpose is to provide leadership and direction for the organisation and to ensure the RCN has a clear vision and strategic plan. They need you to engage with them so they can be informed and represent the issues you're experiencing on the ground.

We know for many of you that is having enough nursing staff to deliver safe patient care and our priorities this year will be securing investment to grow the nursing workforce and seeking more legislation to make sure there is accountability for safe nurse staffing levels. Please join us in our mission to bring about real change.

rcn.org.uk/safestaffing



The two sides of me

Faith Vargas discusses the challenges of being a nurse and a new mum

Having spent the last nine months on maternity leave, I'm now ready to return to work – and this leaves me plagued by a whirlpool of emotions.

Will being a nurse get in the way of being a mum? Will being a mum hinder my opportunity to progress in my career?

Nursing is challenging, as I'm sure many would testify. There was a time I relished the long hours and wouldn't bat an eyelid at staying behind an extra hour to see a situation through.

But now I sit at home, with the tenderness of a tiny human nestled in my arms, I wonder if I will ever be that person again.

Can I ever look forward to heading out that door and leaving her behind? What if I miss her first steps or her first words?

I will give up work, be a stay-at-home mum, spend my days having coffee out and selling knitwear – or so I tell myself.

Now meet the other me, who lives side-by-side with me as a mother and rears her head to confuse my already addled brain.

She meets colleagues for drinks and listening to their stories she worries she has become boring. This other me often refers to her daughter's nappy as a number on the Bristol stool chart.

Can I be both these people? I might be able to do both well or I might not – but I have to wake up each morning and give it my very best.

8 FEATURES

Supporting healthy choices

How members got together to create an app that helps nurses make lifestyle changes

A recent *Nursing Standard* survey showed one in four nurses class themselves as obese. Of the 3,035 nurses who took part in the survey, 71% said they feel their employer offers little or no support to help them maintain a healthy weight or lifestyle.

It's statistics like these that prompted nurses working for C3 Collaborating for Health to launch the Healthy Weight Initiative for Nurses (WIN) project in 2015.

That led to an interactive NURSING YOU resource being developed, which was turned into a free app for nurses last year.

The app enables nurses to reflect on how they make decisions at work and set goals to help them achieve and maintain a healthy weight. It includes wellbeing assessments, tracking functions, recipes and health tips.

Exclusively for nurses

Nurses were contacted as part of the project through focus groups, workshops and surveys. "All the nurses we contacted agreed they wanted an online tool that would help them recognise triggers for unhealthy habits and would lead them to make little changes and better choices," says Michaela Nuttall, a cardiovascular nurse and consultant for C3 Collaborating for Health (pictured).

"But they wanted it to be different from all the apps, websites, books and classes already available to help people lose weight and stay healthy. They wanted a tool that was created with nurses' unique workplace challenges in mind."



Selena Clarke is a burns and plastic reconstruction specialist nurse and was part of the app advisory team. "Being an overweight nurse, I felt the project helped me tackle my own obesity in a way that worked with my job and its associated issues," says Selena.

"I've lost four stone in weight, started running three times a week, and even ran a 10k. I've started dancing and progressed to dancing in competitions – something I would never have done previously. I feel happier and more in control of my body. And, I am no longer diabetic."

The app now has more than 1,000 users, the majority of whom are women, with 80% citing weight loss as their main reason for using it.

"I feel much more confident to tackle the issues of weight management with my patients; previously it was a subject I

shied away from," adds Selena. "Physically I have noticed I ache less after a long shift and the additional exercise has helped with my mood both in and out of work."

"I hope I have inspired a couple of the nurses I work with to take positive steps to ensure they can continue to nurse in a healthy manner. Weight loss is an emotive subject. With the added issues of being a nurse there is no easy solution but having options that are simple and effective is a good starting point."

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I ache less after a long shift and the additional exercise has helped with my mood

Words by Susan Embley. Picture by Gareth Harmer

The NURSING YOU app was designed and conceived by nurses, exclusively for nurses. Find out more about it and how to gain free access by visiting rcn.org.uk/nursing-you. The work is part of the RCN's *Healthy Workplace, Healthy You* campaign, which supports nursing professionals to lead healthy lifestyles so they can maintain both physical and mental wellbeing. Develop your own self-care plan at rcn.org.uk/healthy-workplace/healthy-you

How to use social media to progress your career

READ MORE ONLINE
rcn.org.uk/
bulletin

Ruth Jones from the RCN careers service shares her top tips

We tend to think of social media as a means of keeping in touch with friends, showing off our latest holiday photos, or following the ups and downs of celebrities. But many health care professionals forget that they can also use social media to boost their career, find jobs, identify opportunities, network, grow as a professional and market themselves.

1 Get a LinkedIn account

LinkedIn is a global professional networking site where you can create and maintain your own professional profile and portfolio, which you can then share with potential employers, useful contacts and peers.

2 Follow influential professionals

Listening to what the leaders within (or outside) your industry have to say can be an essential aspect of your professional development. From observing how leaders express their opinions and, in turn, how people respond to them, you can learn a lot about communication, leadership and influencing.

3 Join the RCN forums

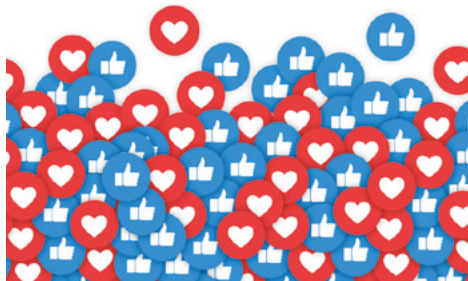
The RCN has many professional forums aimed at different clinical areas within nursing. It's free to join and once joined, you can share knowledge and ideas, and contribute to the professional voice of the RCN. rcn.org.uk/forums

4 Follow organisations in your field

"Follow" relevant regulatory bodies, charities, organisations and medical/nursing journals on social media platforms. They will share interesting information about industry news, campaigns, initiatives and opportunities, meaning you can easily stay up to date.

5 Stalk yourself

Research conducted by Monster and YouGov showed that 36% of UK employers turned down candidates because of their social media profiles, with 65% of HR professionals admitting to Googling candidates. To avoid being tossed in the "no" pile, it's important to constantly study and review your social media presence, and check your privacy settings.



6 Give positively

Go into the social media world with the aim of "giving and spreading positivity". This could be as simple as sharing others' posts, commending an organisation or charity on something they've done well or helping to raise awareness of a good cause.

7 Remain professional

Imagine you've just spent three hours writing a job application emphasising how passionate you are about nursing, only for an employer to run a search and find a reel of your posts moaning about your profession, job, colleagues or employer. It's OK to be critical, but always remain professional.

8 Aim to engage

Encourage people to engage with you. You'll learn so much and widen your viewpoints as well as your network. Rather than just posting your opinion, aim to invoke discussion or open up a debate. E.g. "For me, the most important aspect of nursing is X. What's the most important aspect of your nursing practice and why?"

9 Say cheese

If you're using social media accounts for professional purposes, make sure you have a professional photo to match. Photos from nights out or layered with snapchat filters can give an unprofessional impression overall and put employers off if you're scouting for jobs.

10 Create and contribute

Consider writing for the web. There are loads of ways to do it and it's not as scary as it sounds. You could write a professional blog, submit an article for a nursing journal, or craft a well-thought-out opinion piece and share it on your social media platforms.



For more advice and guidance on maximising your career opportunities, visit the RCN careers resources page: rcn.org.uk/careers

Meet Yvonne...

Our new RCN Deputy President has a passion for improving the working lives of nursing staff to enhance patient care, safety and satisfaction

READ MORE
ONLINE

[rcn.org.uk/
bulletin](http://rcn.org.uk/bulletin)

Why did you want to become a nurse?

My mother worked as an auxiliary nurse in Bristol after coming here from Guyana in the 1960s. As a little girl I remember watching her care for patients and thinking that nursing was the most wonderful profession in the world. I never wanted to be anything else.

What is your current role?

I'm the Director of the Workforce Race Equality Standard (WRES) for NHS England, a role I've had since 2015 when the standard was launched. It's my job

to help ensure employees from black and minority ethnic (BME) backgrounds have equal access to career opportunities and receive fair treatment in the workplace.

What are the key issues facing BME nursing staff?

Data shows that if you're from certain ethnic backgrounds you have a poorer experience of working in the NHS. You're more likely to be disciplined and taken off the register, and less likely to be appointed or sent on non-mandatory training. The experience of BME staff is a barometer for the experiences of all. It highlights the red flags of what is going on in an organisation. Ensuring staff feel valued and supported is absolutely crucial to the long-term success of the NHS.

How does the NHS need to change?

There is so much evidence that shows having an engaged workforce leads to higher quality patient care, patient safety and patient satisfaction. We also know that poorer treatment of staff results in poorer quality care for patients. Two things drive the NHS: improving care for patients and saving money. If you have an engaged workforce, you get both these things.

“

Ensuring staff feel valued and supported is absolutely crucial to the long-term success of the NHS

How will being RCN Deputy President help you do this?

It gives me a platform to access more people. Changing workplace culture is tricky. The NHS is a microcosm of society and not everyone buys into my vision.

But the key to changing the experiences of BME staff, and therefore all staff, is to make people understand the bigger picture.

I can access senior leaders in my job, but the majority of BME nurses are band 5, managed by band 6 or 7 nurses. These people haven't been touched by the WRES particularly but they're the ones that can instigate real change on the ground.

If we don't address these issues, or don't think they're important, nursing staff will invariably feel that it is a job and not a career and patients will feel that they're getting a service that is not as good as it could be.

About Yvonne

Yvonne started nurse training at 18, first working in cardiac care, then orthopaedics before doing a postgraduate certificate in mental health and working in psychiatry. After starting a family, she moved into health visiting, then community practice teaching before taking on her first management position. She was mentored by Lord Nigel Crisp, Chief Executive of the NHS, in 2004 and was his private secretary for health for a year. She led the National Breaking Through Programme, helping to develop BME staff in the NHS, before taking on her current role.

The RCN's campaign for safe nurse staffing legislation in England is being designed in partnership with members. A workshop will be held next month to start the process of jointly deciding what a new law should seek to deliver. It will see members shaping plans for the campaign and sharing ideas of how to increase support for a new law. Visit rcn.org.uk/safestaffing to find out more about campaigning work in all four UK countries.

...and Anne Marie

Our new RCN President wants to help introduce safe nurse staffing legislation in England by drawing on her expertise in nursing research

What attracted you to the role of RCN President?

I've been working as part of a team of researchers for many years gathering evidence of the need for safe nurse staffing legislation. We have two decades worth of data and now is the time to really push for legislative reform. Safe staffing issues are so critical and I think I have something to offer in driving that agenda forward.

How have you been involved in the RCN's safe staffing work to date?

I was part of the College's expert reference group, which brought together people who have specialist knowledge of the safe nurse staffing agenda. We created a set of principles that we would want a law to deliver. Ensuring there is accountability for safe nurse staffing is absolutely essential but agreeing what legislation should look like is tricky.

“

We need a legislative package that satisfies the demands for patient safety, worker wellbeing and system resilience. It's a big ask

What else do you want to achieve?

I want to make sure the RCN is where it should be in terms of its governance and communications. We won't be able to accomplish our goals for safe staffing unless the work is well-led and exquisitely communicated. We must be at the top of our game in our decision-making processes so we have the confidence to confront any situation. Achieving that requires leadership at every level from members. They must feel engaged and want to mobilise to fight for change.

What is your vision for nursing?

I want nursing to realise its potential as a social force for good. The problems in the profession are caused because we don't have enough nurses in senior positions to support the workforce. That's why things go seriously wrong. It's why nursing staff are not well looked after, it's why they become disillusioned with the profession and it's why they leave. We must have more nurses in leadership so that they can be role models for those coming up behind them. Nursing gave me a chance and opened those doors, so I want it to be that for other people.

Your role seems quite removed from hands-on nursing. Do you still consider yourself a nurse?

Absolutely. 100%. I am a nurse. Let's not get boxed in. We must challenge the stereotype of what nurses do and what they can be. Yes, nurses are at the coalface delivering direct patient care in a whole range of settings. And they're doing an amazing job. But nurses are also teachers, researchers, policy-formers, decision-makers and leaders.



About Anne Marie

Anne Marie grew up in Kirkcaldy in Fife, Scotland. She followed in the footsteps of her mother, who was a nurse, and did her nursing degree at Edinburgh University before working in vascular surgery. She then took on a clinical academic role in Nottingham before studying modern history at Oxford University. She went on to be a nursing lecturer, before receiving a Harkness Fellowship to be mentored in the United States by pioneering nurse researcher Linda Aiken. She is now Professor of Nursing Policy at King's College London, a role she's had since 2011.

Interviews by Kim Scott. Pictures by Gareth Harmer

12 FEATURES

Make your money go further

RCN welfare adviser Ian King explains how you can get money back on your RCN membership fees, work shoes, tights and more



I'm sure that if the RCN offered a discount code on membership fees it would be shared widely on Facebook. With more than 400,000 members looking to make a saving, it might even "go viral" on Twitter. But there's already a really easy way to get up to 20% off your RCN membership fees. In fact, you can get money back on a range of job-related expenses.

As a guide, members who are UK tax payers can claim up to 20% tax relief on their RCN subscriptions. What you'll actually get depends on what you've spent and the rate at which you pay tax.

Claiming tax back doesn't need to be a chore and you don't need to go to an expensive specialist company for help. This is a must-do for most

members. And it will take you hardly any time at all to do it.

Based on our current membership fees, members who are registered nurses could claim back £39.37 a year. In practice, this means that they'll actually only pay £157.48 instead of £196.85 for their membership.

Backdate your claim

If this is the first time you've claimed tax relief, you can claim for the current tax year and submit a backdated claim for the previous four tax years all on one form.

Don't worry if you're not sure how much you've paid the RCN in the last four years. We can get that information really easily for you. Get in touch with RCN Direct on

0345 772 6100 and they'll be able to get those figures for you.

Remember, it's not just your RCN subscriptions you can claim for. If you're registered with the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), you can make a claim for your fees. If you have an annual subscription to *Nursing Standard*, you can claim for that too.

You can also claim an allowance of £12 a year if you have to wear special types of shoes in the workplace and additional tax relief of £6 per year for tights and socks. If your employer doesn't look after the cleaning arrangements or provide free laundry facilities for you to use, you can get tax relief at the rate of £125 a year on that too.

So let's not delay any longer. Download a tax relief form from rcn.org.uk/membership/tax-relief and send it to: Pay As You Earn and Self-Assessment, HM Revenue & Customs, BX9 1AS.

Find out more

As long as you pay tax in the UK you can apply for tax relief. Non-UK tax payers aren't eligible to claim. You'll get tax relief based on what you've spent and the rate at which you pay tax. You can't claim if your employer either gives you all the money back or provides an alternative benefit.

Contact HMRC on 0300 200 3300 or visit gov.uk/tax-relief-for-employees for more information.

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Registered nurses could claim back £39.37 a year on their RCN membership fees

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Helping older people get active

Sarah Winfield-Davies from the Older People's Forum explains how she's trying to raise awareness of national guidelines on physical activity



One in four patients say they'd get more active if advised to by their nurse or GP. For older people especially, receiving this sort of advice could make a huge difference, particularly in reducing falls, frailty, increasing mobility and improving quality of life.

According to Public Health England (PHE), physical inactivity contributes to around 30% of falls and functional limitations experienced by older people, but those aged 65 and over are the least active.

A group of nurses funded by the Burdett Trust for Nursing and PHE is trying to raise awareness of national guidelines on recommended levels of exercise. By training to become physical activity clinical champions they're filling the knowledge gaps among nursing staff to help more patients achieve the recommended levels of activity.

"We're equipping nursing staff to understand the guidelines and to talk to patients about taking up or maintaining regular

physical activity," says clinical champion Sarah Winfield-Davies, team lead of the North Care Homes Team and member of the RCN Older People's Forum steering committee. "It's about empowering staff to make every contact count."

Benefits for everyone

Sarah provides free training sessions to health care professionals across the south west of England. She outlines how physical activity can benefit patients – acting as a preventative measure, facilitating recovery or slowing the progress of certain conditions. She then suggests ways to start conversations about physical activity in clinical practice, supporting patients to find activities they can work into their lives.

The benefits of physical activity across all age groups are proven and supported by the UK Chief Medical Officers' Guidelines on Physical Activity. For older people this is 75 minutes of vigorous activity or 150 minutes

of moderately intense activity, or a combination of both, each week. People over 65 are also advised to do activities twice a week that help build muscle and improve balance.

"Don't be fearful of promoting physical activity to older people," urges Sarah. "The benefits of this are for everyone. You can make a difference whatever the age of the patient."

Sarah highlights that older people don't need to join a gym to get active and nursing staff can suggest less intimidating activities that fit with their lifestyle. Cardiovascular activity such as light gardening and walking around the house can help improve health when done regularly. Muscle strengthening exercises such as carrying shopping or doing bicep curls with cans of beans can also be beneficial.

These activities can keep older people mobile for longer and reduce their chances of hospital admission. In 2013-14 there were 255,000 emergency admissions related to falls in patients aged 65 or over, and such falls can lead to fractures that reduce mobility. Sarah says that sharing the benefits of exercise with patients can motivate them to try the activities.

"Often, patients are waiting for permission to do physical activity, so as health care professionals we need to give them permission. It's about reassuring patients and making it work for them," Sarah says. "Don't let age be a barrier to physical activity."

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Don't be fearful of promoting physical activity to older people

Words by
Rachael Healy

🕒 To learn more about the clinical champions programme and how you can incorporate advice on physical activity into your clinical practice, contact Public Health England at physicalActivity@phe.gov.uk

IN THE SPOTLIGHT



Nurses in Management and Leadership Forum

Who's the Chair?

Sally Bassett has been a member of the forum since she was a junior nurse. She joined the committee three years ago and was elected Chair in 2017, taking up the position a year ago. She's keen to emphasise that "everyone is a leader", while making sure nurses also have chances to develop their management capabilities, which she sees as the "forgotten partner of leadership".

Recent highlights?

There was a joint event with the Executive Nurse Network on leading and managing change. At RCN Congress 2018, the forum shared seven top tips for a successful nursing career in leadership and management, and launched its Twitter account (@RCNMandLForum). Sally and the committee are now looking for digital-savvy nurses to help boost their social media presence.

What's coming up?

On 18 January, the forum is hosting *Leadership, Management and You*,

an event at RCN HQ promising to improve your ability to conduct critical conversations and have a positive impact on the people you work with. Find out more at ren.org.uk/LMY19 In March, there'll be a masterclass on the theme "Everyone's a leader" as part of the RCN Education Forum's conference. The forum will also be recruiting two new committee members this year.

Why join?

Sally says: "We're energised and we've got a good committee. Although we're small, we've made great progress in the past year. Members have genuine opportunities to influence and inform, as well as learn and develop their nursing management and leadership practice. It's absolutely critical that all nursing staff think about their leadership and management capability. It's cross-cutting – not all nurses will go on to formal management or leadership positions, but all nurses manage and lead themselves and patient care."

Find out more about the Leadership and Management Forum at ren.org.uk/forums or visit their Facebook page.

WHAT I'M THINKING



Adrian Brown Mental Health Forum

For the past five years, people have been nudged to try Dry January. But those drinking at higher levels, who might be dependent upon alcohol, could be at risk from withdrawal symptoms, such as seizures and delirium tremens.

We must consider the psychological impact of alcohol too. It is the substance most frequently related to low mood and acts of self-harm. This could be due to the sedative properties of alcohol lowering inhibitions towards risky behaviour. Or it could be that people try to block difficult feelings with an easily available substance.

When someone has a mental illness and drinks alcohol, they are more likely to be physically dependent (needing to drink every day), but many do not get physical withdrawals. Alcohol combines with other physical health concerns to increase chronic health problems. People with mental health problems already have their life expectancies reduced by as much as 10 years.

It is important to give people options – support should be offered to reduce drinking for those who cannot manage abstinence. While Dry January may raise awareness about the benefits of not drinking, even Dry Tuesday and Thursday can reduce risks of dependence and impact on physical health. If someone cannot stop drinking, aiming to cut down is a step in the right direction.

tinyurl.com/rcn-mental-health



Funding available for mental health research

Members of the Mental Health and Children and Young People (CYP) Forums are invited to submit proposals for a new research project. The RCN Foundation will provide up to £30,000 in funding for projects that will assemble the available evidence on nursing-led interventions supporting the mental health of children and young people.

Public Health England revealed that 70% of children and adolescents who experienced mental health problems did not receive the right treatment early enough. Research looking at early and pre-crisis nursing interventions will aim to find the gaps in service provision and establish an evidence base for related RCN grants in the coming three years.



The proposed research should take place in 2019, cover all four UK countries and consult with a range of frontline nursing teams, charities, children and young people with mental health issues, parents and carers.

The deadline for applications is 5pm on 31 January. Send questions and applications to grants@rcnfoundation.org.uk

16 EVENTS

For details of more events visit the region and country pages of the RCN website or go to rcn.org.uk/events

London

Protecting vulnerable children

29 April
RCN HQ
20 Cavendish Square
London W1G 0RN

This one-day conference for nurses working with looked after children (LAC) will tackle issues such as how to protect vulnerable children, the challenges facing care leavers and child sexual exploitation.

It will provide a space to discuss ideas and network with other nurses working in the specialty as well as provide updates from a national and regional perspective. It will focus on the voice of the looked after child to help improve experiences and services for them.

Karen Hughes, Chair of the RCN LAC Nurse Community, says: "We're passionate about using this event as an opportunity to influence change and make sure we're working to the best of our practice to protect looked after children.

"I encourage LAC nurses from all over the UK to attend with an opportunity to hear from the NHS England Head of Safeguarding, Kenny Gibson, who will discuss emotive and challenging topics that affect looked after children."

The day will be interactive with ample opportunities to ask questions and get feedback.

📍 Visit rcn.org.uk/LAC19 or call 02920 546 460 to book.



Bristol

Leadership in nursing education

12-13 March
Mercure Bristol Grand Hotel
Broad Street
Bristol BS1 2EL

Accrue more than 17 hours of CPD for revalidation by attending this two-day conference aimed at those working in nurse education.

Discover the latest developments and research in this field and work with colleagues to explore how you can improve your practice.

Pauline Walsh, Chair of the RCN Education Forum, says: "Expert speakers, themed sessions and a chance to network with like-minded people are all reasons why this conference is such an important part of the RCN Education Forum



calendar. It's an opportunity to reflect on your own practice and come away with lots of ideas that you feel empowered to use."

📍 Visit rcn.org.uk/RCNED19 or call 02920 546 460.

Cardiff

Dementia, delirium and depression

21 February
RCN Wales
Ty Maeth
King George V Drive East
Cardiff CF14 4XZ

This morning seminar for registered nurses will provide an overview of dementia, delirium and depression and how to enhance practice to improve patient care.

Topics include diagnosis, clinical presentation and practice-based issues.

The closing date for bookings is Thursday 7 February.

📍 For further information contact Rhona Workman on 02920 680713 or email CPDwales@rcn.org.uk