

Activate

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News, views and support for RCN activists



New year, new leadership

The RCN enters the new year with a change of leadership in the form of a new RCN President, Deputy President and Council

January 1 marked the start of a two-year term of office for the College's newly elected RCN President Professor Anne Marie Rafferty and Deputy President Yvonne Coghill.

Twelve RCN Council members also begin one-year terms of office this month following elections held between 21 November and 11 December 2018.

The six new members are Evan Keir (health practitioner), Ann Marie O'Neill (Northern Ireland), Geoff Earl (Scotland), Deirdre Sissons (East Midlands), Heather Mercer (South East) and Geoffrey Walker (South East).

Voters chose to re-elect five members including Cynthia Davis (London), Trevor Peel (Northern), Dave Dawes (North West), Sue Warner (West Midlands) and Carol Popplestone (Yorkshire and the Humber). Richard Jones (Wales) was re-elected uncontested.

Following the announcement of the election results, Acting RCN Chief Executive Dame Donna Kinnair said: "The field of candidates was exceptionally strong and the College is fortunate to attract people with such broad experience to these top roles.

"The nursing profession faces some of the most significant challenges in a generation and this Council will oversee the launch of fresh campaigning efforts by the RCN to attract people into nursing, arrest the decline in workforce supply and enshrine safe staffing levels in law in every part of the UK."

RCN Council also includes Amy Fancourt, who was elected to represent students in December 2018; BJ Waltho who was elected Chair of RCN Congress in July 2018; and Janice Waters who was elected to represent the Eastern region of England in October last year.

A new Chair, Vice Chair and Honorary Treasurer of RCN Council will now be chosen by Council members and announced at the end of January 2019. Turn to page 2 to read more about our new RCN President and Deputy President.

Meet Anne Marie and Yvonne



Anne Marie Rafferty is our new RCN President. She is the Professor of Nursing Policy at King's College London.

Speaking to *RCN Bulletin* about her ambitions for the role earlier this month, Anne Marie said: "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."



Yvonne Coghill, our new RCN Deputy President, is Director of the Workforce Race Equality Standard at NHS England. Yvonne told *RCN Bulletin*: "I want to help all nursing staff feel valued by helping policy-makers understand the importance of this for the delivery of quality patient care. Nursing is a profession that needs to be taken seriously."

You can read the full interviews at rcn.org.uk/bulletin

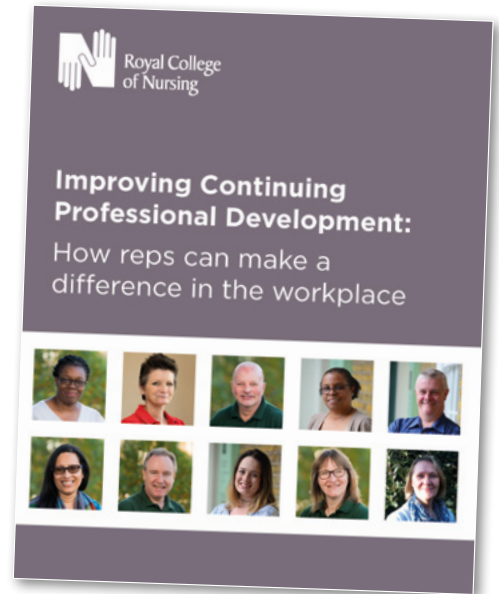
Improving continuing professional development

New RCN guidance supports reps to create a positive learning culture

Continuing professional development (CPD) allows nursing staff to maintain and develop the skills to deliver high quality, safe and effective care. It's also a requirement for revalidation. However, despite its importance, many nurses say it's difficult to access and complete CPD.

A new learning resource, which was co-designed by the RCN UK Learning Reps Committee and RCN Education Forum, has been developed to help learning reps work with employers and education providers to improve opportunities for CPD. It explores the key challenges nursing staff face when trying to access CPD and helps reps identify and overcome any local barriers to training.

Karen Sanders, a learning rep who helped develop the resource, said: "CPD is not an optional extra. It is vital for nursing staff so they can improve and maintain their knowledge, skills and competence, and deliver high-quality patient care. This resource will allow reps to provide the support needed to enable, encourage and empower RCN members to access CPD."



The resource is a sister publication to the RCN's *Improving Mandatory Training* resource. It draws on experiences and information gathered from RCN members who attended a fringe event at Congress last year.

You can download *Improving Continuing Professional Development: How Reps Can Make A Difference in the Workplace* at rcn.org.uk/publications (Code: 007 215)

First nursing associates set to qualify this month



Once qualified, nursing associates will be eligible to join the NMC register from the end of January 2019. They will be working across a variety of settings in England including acute, mental health, community, social care, GP practices and hospices.

At the moment, nursing associates can join the RCN in the health practitioner (HP) category of

membership. However, RCN Council is reviewing the College's current membership categories to embrace the emergence of new roles in the nursing workforce and to reflect the principles of equality and inclusion. RCN Council will be consulting members on proposed changes.

Reps in England will need to work with employers to make sure there is a robust process for introducing nursing associates into the clinical workforce. The RCN is developing a set of resources to support reps with this. It would also be useful for reps to gather information about the job descriptions being drafted for nursing associates working in their organisation.

The resources should be available at the end of January. In the meantime, if you have any urgent questions, contact RCN National Officer Gary Kirwan: gary.kirwan@rcn.org.uk

NHS long term plan won't succeed without enough nurses

The RCN has welcomed publication of the long term plan for the NHS in England but has warned that service improvements will stumble unless the Government tackles chronic staff shortages.

The plan sets out how spending will be prioritised in the NHS over the next 10 years and includes a focus on prevention and early detection with GPs, mental health services and community care getting the biggest funding increases. However, its plans for securing the staff required to deliver services are vague, with pledges of a further workforce plan later in 2019.

Though it recognises the strain nurses are under as a result of staff shortages, it suggests some

concerning solutions for increasing the number of nursing graduates including the creation of online degree courses linked to placements.

Acting RCN Chief Executive Dame Donna Kinnair said: "We welcome the ambitions outlined in the plan, and it deserves to succeed. But translating good intentions into better treatment and care for patients relies on having the right number of nurses with the right skills across our NHS.

"As the Prime Minister has said, the NHS's biggest asset is its staff. It is strange then that this plan offers no money for nurses to develop the specialist skills patients need."

Jersey pay

Members on Jersey are considering their next steps after 62% rejected the "final" pay offer from the States of Jersey government. The RCN ballot asked members whether they wanted to accept or reject a 3.1% pay rise for 2018 and a 3% pay rise for 2019. The turnout was 63%.

Though industrial action remains a last resort, nursing staff on the island are angry that their pay lags behind that of allied health professionals working there. The RCN has contacted the Jersey Advisory and Conciliation Service to mediate a conversation with States negotiators. At a recent branch meeting, members were unanimous in their decision to ask the South East regional board for a referral to RCN Council to pursue industrial action if mediation does not result in an improved pay offer.

Tribute to Stanley Holder



Pictured: Stanley's family members Kay, Gail and Peter with former RCN President Cecilia Akrisie Anim (second left) and Ian Norris, RCN Outer North East London Branch Secretary (second right)

A room at the RCN's UK headquarters has been dedicated to the prominent activist

In December, family members, friends and colleagues of Stanley Holder OBE FRCN attended an event at the RCN's headquarters in London where then RCN President Cecilia Akrisie Anim unveiled a plaque in his memory.

Stanley, who died in 2017, was the first male nurse to hold a post in a London Teaching Hospital and the second man to become an RCN member. Stanley went on to become a Director of Nurse Education and helped to overhaul nursing education in the UK through his involvement in Project 2000.

Throughout his life, Stanley was a key figure at the RCN. He chaired the College's annual Representative Body Meetings from 1969 to 1972 and became the first man to hold an honorary post in the College when he served as Vice Chair of RCN Council from 1976 to 1979. Stanley was awarded an RCN Fellowship in 1979 in recognition of his unwavering commitment to promoting nursing as a profession and to developing the careers of others.

Speaking at the event, Cecilia said: "Stan achieved a great deal in his life and helped so many people. We remember him fondly, and are forever grateful for his work to promote nurses, nursing, and the work of the College."

Financial advice

January is the perfect time to take stock of finances. Help RCN members secure their financial future by organising a complimentary seminar or surgery day in your workplace or branch with the RCN's partner organisation Lighthouse Financial Advice. Lighthouse Financial Advice offers sessions on all aspects of financial planning including retirement planning, boosting your pension and protecting your family's income. To find out more or organise a local event, contact Alan Riches at alan.riches@lighthousegroup.plc.uk

The campaign for safe staffing in England



RCN England Director Patricia Marquis explains how reps, members and staff will shape the campaign in England together

The RCN's campaign for staffing for safe and effective care looks different in each of the four countries of the UK. That's because the situation in each country is different. One thing stays the same though – we're all fighting to make sure there are enough nursing staff to provide the care patients need.

In England, we'll be working alongside members to shape every aspect of the campaign right from the start including, what needs to happen locally and nationally. We'll then be working with you to deliver it. We'll also build on what we've learned from our successful campaigns in Wales and Scotland.

Make no mistake, activists are absolutely integral to the success of this work. Many of you have already told us that you're ready to follow in the footsteps of colleagues in Wales and Scotland to lobby support from members, our government and the public.

I hope this campaign will feel really different. It'll be collaborative from the start and responsive to what we find out along the way. If something isn't working then we'll revisit it and do it differently. I hope you're as excited as I am to get stuck in. Planning has started and we'll be sending out more information soon.

What's happening elsewhere in the UK?

Safe staffing legislation which covers NHS hospitals has already been introduced in Wales. The RCN is continuing to campaign to ensure this delivers improvements for nursing teams and their patients and for the law to be extended to other areas of nursing. See page right.

The Scottish Government published the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill in May. The RCN's campaign *Ask for More* is working to influence and shape the final Bill. Turn to page 6 to read more.

In Northern Ireland there is no law on nurse staffing levels, but the Department of Health (Northern Ireland) has outlined nurse staffing in the Delivering Care framework. Visit rcn.org.uk/safestaffing to read about our campaigning work in all four countries of the UK.

ASK AN ADVISER



Changing jobs



10 things to check before you sign

People often aspire to find a new job or new career direction as part of their new year's resolutions.

When you're offered a new job, it's important to ask the right questions and check your contract carefully before you sign on the dotted line.

RCN Direct receives a lot of calls from members about contractual issues including disputes over pay, annual leave and probationary and notice periods. Many of these issues could have been resolved if the member had checked their contract or employer's policies.

Once a contract is signed, it's a legally binding document and there can be serious consequences if it's breached.

Our online checklist includes 10 key things members should consider before they sign a new contract. Visit tiny.cc/contract-checklist

For more information, speak in confidence to an RCN Direct adviser any time between 8.30am and 8.30pm, 365 days per year.

RCN DIRECT
www.rcn.org.uk/direct
0345 772 6100



View from the frontline



Safe staffing in Wales

I've been a learning rep since 2007 and an RCN Wales board member for two terms. One of the biggest campaigns I've been involved in was getting the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act passed into law last April. Our greatest challenge was to get political support by lobbying Welsh Assembly Members (AMs). RCN Wales has a good relationship with the Assembly and this definitely helped us to get the law pushed through. Political support, academic evidence and engagement with activists and RCN members were all crucial.

Along with other members, I was invited to speak at the Wales Assembly and give my view about why we need safe staffing. As a matron in an acute care setting, I know first-hand how desperate things have been on the ward. Having those different voices telling AMs what it is really like working in the NHS without adequate staffing sealed the deal.

What this law means in practice is that on every shift, health boards need to be recording how many patients and how many nursing staff there are and report this back to the Government to show how they are implementing this new act. The drive now is to make sure safe staffing is enshrined in law in all countries of the UK, and to make sure the act is extended to other care settings in Wales, not just acute medical and surgical.

Sandra Robinson-Clark, RCN UK Learning Reps Committee member

Culture and banter in the workplace

Mr Evans was employed by Xactly Corporation Limited as a sales representative from 4 January 2016 until he was dismissed on 16 December 2016. During his employment he made no sales. Following his dismissal, he made a claim of race and disability discrimination on the basis he had type 1 diabetes and an association with the travelling community.

The Employment Tribunal analysed Xactly's office culture and found it to be one of "jibing and teasing". Mr Evans' line manager referred to it as "banter" and said that Mr Evans often participated in it. However, Mr Evans alleged that he wasn't comfortable within the office environment. His case focused on one particular comment: he was called a "fat, ginger pikey", which he believed amounted to harassment. He further alleged that he was dismissed for complaining about that and other incidents.

On the face of it, the Employment Tribunal found the comment to be derogatory, demeaning and unpleasant, and a potentially discriminatory and harassing one to make. However, having assessed the context in which the remark was made, it concluded the treatment didn't meet the definition of harassment. Mr Evans' claims were rejected in their entirety and the Employment Tribunal found he had been genuinely dismissed for poor performance.

Mr Evans appealed the decision but the Employment Appeal Tribunal agreed that the comments complained of did not amount to direct discrimination or harassment contrary to section 26 of the Equality Act 2010. This decision highlights that harassment claims are highly fact-sensitive and context is key when determining them.

Joanne Galbraith-Marten
RCN Head of Legal
(Employment)



Ask for more... an update on the safe staffing campaign in Scotland



By the time you finish reading this sentence, a nurse has had to move on to their next patient.

It's time for change. Ask for more.

Show your support for Scotland's nursing teams at www.rcn.org.uk/askformore

@RCNScot #askformore

The RCN is calling for safe staffing legislation in all four countries of the UK. We take a look at what's happening in Scotland...

Since the Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill was introduced in May 2018, RCN members in Scotland have been helping to shape what a new law for safe nurse staffing levels might look like.

Sarah Atherton, RCN Scotland Public Affairs Advisor, says: "This campaign is about harnessing the power of our members and the nursing voice to say this is why we need legislation and this is the difference it will make.

"It's about influencing and shaping the new law from a professional and trade union perspective

"We need people to get behind the campaign, show their support and share their stories"

to make it the best law possible for nursing staff and patients. But it's also about making sure nursing staff are aware of what's happening and involved every step of the way.

"It's one thing to get the right legislation in place but it needs to be delivered and rolled out in a meaningful way so it's important that nursing staff understand where they fit in it. We want them to know that it's coming and to be involved in it from the beginning."

What's happened so far?

The *Ask for More* campaign was launched in September last year following the introduction of the bill into the Scottish Parliament at the end of May.

On 6 December 2018, the bill reached an important milestone when the Scottish Parliament voted unanimously in favour of its general principles meaning the bill now moves on to the next stage of the parliamentary process.

"There are three stages to the parliamentary process in Scotland," explains Sarah. "In Stage 1, the committee responsible for the bill calls for written and oral evidence. The RCN was very much involved in this stage, making sure nursing staff working on the ground were heard."

The committee then considers what they've heard and writes a report indicating to parliament whether it agrees with the general principles of the bill – in this case it did. A Stage 1 debate was then held.

"The debate was really positive," says Sarah. "It was great to see so many MSPs (Members of the Scottish Parliament) standing up and making the case for nursing, some reading out direct quotes from RCN members. It showed how powerful member stories are."

Although the debate highlighted the impact the campaign is having, Sarah says there is still a lot of work to be done.

"We still need people to get behind the campaign, show their support and share their stories," says Sarah. "The bill is now in Stage 2 so it's back with the committee for detailed scrutiny. MSPs can put forward amendments to

the draft legislation so a lot of our work now is focusing on talking to MSPs and lobbying them to lodge amendments to improve the bill based on what RCN members have told us they need.

“A key amendment is that the bill needs to work in real time. At the moment there is nothing that would instantly help a nurse when they come onto shift. There needs to be a process for monitoring and mitigating risk when issues arise there and then.

“Another key ask is to make senior charge nurses (SCNs) non-caseload holding. SCNs have said they don’t have time to talk to patients’ families and provide the level of care that they need and want to.”

If the bill and amendments pass Stage 2, it will then enter Stage 3 where further changes can be made but through a meeting of the whole of parliament rather than the committee. The Scottish Parliament is expected to hold the final Stage 3 vote, which will decide if the law is passed or not, before Easter recess in April.

Making sure the nursing voice is heard

RCN reps like Jas Clark have been instrumental in making sure the voices of nursing staff in Scotland are heard by the MSPs who are considering the bill.

Jas has been helping to gather evidence from nursing staff to illustrate the enormous pressures they’re under. “I think to engage

“I think to engage members, you have to go to them”

members, you have to go to them,” says Jas. “This whole campaign is based on the fact that nursing staff don’t have enough time so I go out and physically visit them on the wards.

“We’ve been asking nursing staff to record their answers to five questions about how staff shortages are affecting them and what safe staffing levels would mean. It’s been really popular with staff. You can feel the buzz in the department – people want to answer the questions because they feel so passionately about making things better for patients.”

Jas is hopeful that legislation will make a difference but says that some areas still concern her: “I do worry about how it will work. What will happen if one day you haven’t got safe staffing? How will nurses be able to report it? There needs to be failsafe mechanisms. It’s about being able to provide quality patient care which is safe for both patients and staff.

“I think reps and the RCN have an important role to play once a law is in place. We can reassure nursing staff that it’s OK to report things and support them to do this.”

Sarah agrees: “One of the key principles underpinning this campaign is that any legislation supports a strong professional voice. It needs to empower nurses at all levels to be able to exercise their professional judgement about whether the number of nursing staff and the skills that those staff have is right at any given point to provide safe and effective care.”

“

I started nursing to look after and care for people, but poor staffing levels mean that I struggle to give the best care.

It’s time for change. Ask for more.

Show your support for Scotland’s nursing teams at www.rcn.org.uk/askformore

🐦 @RCNScot #askformore

Get involved today

- Sign up to show your support at rcn.org.uk/askformore
- Share your story or download a poster at the website above or contact askformore@rcn.org.uk
- Show your support on social media using #askformore and don’t forget to include a link to the campaign website.

To find out more about how the RCN is campaigning for safe staffing elsewhere in the UK, turn to page 4.

NOTICEBOARD

Nominate now



Nominations for this year's RCN Awards are closing soon. Make sure your activist colleagues get the recognition they deserve by nominating them for the RCN Rep and SIO of the Year awards. The awards celebrate the work and contributions of exceptional RCN activists. Shortlisted candidates will be invited to attend an awards ceremony at Congress 2019 in Liverpool and the winners will receive £500.

Members can also be nominated for the RCN Award of Merit or for an RCN Fellowship. Nominations close on 1 February 2019. Visit rcn.org.uk/rcnawards

Get involved

Do you want to play an active part in transforming the perception of nursing? Find out how you can help shape the future of the *Nursing Now England* campaign by attending an event at RCN headquarters in London on 19 February 2019. This one-day event (10am to 4pm) will be facilitated by Helen Bevan, NHS Horizons Chief Transformation Officer. Book your place at www.events.england.nhs.uk/events/rcn-activists

Changes to practice-based learning

Register to attend our free regional workshops to find out how the changes will affect you

New NMC education standards were introduced in May last year and now the way practice-based learning is delivered is changing.

These standards will have an impact on nursing and midwifery students, nurse apprentices, trainee nursing associates, return to practice nurses and all current registered nurses and midwives.

Over the next few months we're holding regional workshops to make sure all nursing staff understand the new standards, the changes to practice-based learning and what is expected of them.

These free half-day workshops are open to members and non-members and will count towards CPD (continuing professional development) for revalidation.



The events will offer nursing staff the chance to:

- learn more about the new standards
- discover more about the roles of practice supervisor, practice assessor and academic assessor, which will replace mentors and sign-off mentors
- understand the challenges and opportunities for practice-based learning.

To find out more and to book your place, visit rcn.org.uk/rcnworkshops

Campaign impact

Is the RCN's *Rest Rehydrate Refuel* campaign having an impact in your workplace?

The 3Rs campaign aims to improve the health and wellbeing of the nursing workforce by encouraging managers to make sure nursing staff are taking their breaks, are well hydrated and have access to nutritious food. It also encourages nursing staff to practise self-care and assert their right to a break.

With this year's Nutrition and Hydration Week fast approaching (11 to 17 March), we'd like to hear how people are using the campaign materials and about any other interesting work taking place to promote the principles of the campaign and staff wellbeing. Email kim.sunley@rcn.org.uk to share your experiences.

To find out more about the campaign visit rcn.org.uk/rest-rehydrate-refuel

Tools of the trade



Over 11 million days are lost at work each year because of stress. The Health and Safety Executive has resources to help managers tackle employee stress. Visit tinyurl.com/HSE-stress

A recent report from ACAS explores why performance management is important and how to get it right. Find out more about developing staff and download the report at tinyurl.com/ACAS-performance

"Why employ disabled people in the NHS?" asks Jane Hutton, author of *A Dozen Brilliant Reasons to Employ Disabled People*, in her blog for NHS Employers at tinyurl.com/NHS-Jane-Hatton.

The TUC's Quinn Roache has written a blog exploring the growing pay gap for workers with disabilities. Take a look at tinyurl.com/disability-pay-gap