

# Review of Membership Categories

MEMBER CONSULTATION



We want to find out your views as part of a review of our membership categories and subscription plans.

The aim is to make our arrangements fit for the future and make sure they reflect the changing entry routes into nursing across the UK, support diversity and inclusion, and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Council will use your views and ideas to build a vision of what the future membership of the RCN should be and propose changes to our current membership categories and subscription plans.

The consultation will open in February 2020 and close on 1 April 2020 and further information on taking part can be found on the RCN website.

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# 1. Introduction and background

## Why are we reviewing our membership categories?

The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) prides itself on being the ‘the voice of nursing’ – representing every role, every care setting and every part of the UK.

Historically, only registered nurses were eligible for RCN membership but that was changed in 2001. It’s now simple: if you’re part of the nursing workforce, you’re part of the RCN.

The RCN is consulting members on how we can update our structures and processes to be more inclusive of the whole nursing profession and to support members’ journeys through nursing.

Your professional development and employment rights are equally important to us, no matter which of the many nursing roles you perform. The RCN works in the interest of all its members and being part of our organisation should be valuable and attractive to every individual. To show that every member is equal, we want your support for a single membership.

Our current structures and processes reflect a bygone era for the nursing profession and the RCN must adapt to show it is the voice of everyone working in health and social care. The RCN works in the interest of all its members and no matter where in your nursing career you are right now – being part of our organisation should be valuable to you.

In your workplace our members should be equally respected for the contribution they make to excellent patient care and not divided by job title. The same must apply in the RCN.

The nursing workforce for this new decade will have followed different routes into the profession and experienced different education and development to those at the end of their career. They will work in job roles that did not exist previously - some of which will be registered and others not.

The RCN must adapt to reflect these change and we want your support to move away from membership categories to a single membership.

## Background

At RCN Congress 2019, a consultation on membership categories asked for views on the current arrangements and asked what could be improved.

The review work is being led by a dedicated ‘task-and-finish’ group with member representation from across the organisation and is supported by RCN staff.

After reflecting on the findings of the first consultation, the group would like to present RCN members with a new proposal which best fits these three guiding principles:

- demonstrating true equality and inclusivity for the whole nursing workforce;
- ensuring our arrangements are fit for the future and allowing all nursing professionals to benefit from RCN membership;
- ensuring the long-term financial sustainability of the College itself.

Your views on this consultation will inform a final proposal to Council.

## 2. Proposal – a single membership

### Rationale

A new model must be based on diversity and inclusivity. While the RCN is already proudly committed to this principle, this fundamental change would make it more overt.

A single membership allows the RCN to reflect the workplace and the realities of the nursing profession across the UK.

### Background

Last year, during the consultation, you told us that our membership structures must change to be inclusive of the whole nursing profession.

Currently, your membership category is dictated by the job you hold – ‘registered nurse’, ‘nursing support worker’, ‘student’ or ‘retired’.

But in 2020, it is increasingly difficult to use these titles to describe every member of the nursing workforce. It is now the case that the NMC registers more than the ‘registered nurse’ role; and an individual undertaking a nurse apprenticeship is both in education and the workplace. It is time to turn this on its head. In future, the RCN can make its membership offer open to every part of the nursing profession and not try to make new members fit into old boxes.

### Payment plans

A single membership would not mean everybody will pay the same.

The 2019 consultation found that members support the concept of a link between your membership plan and your income, including concessionary rates for newly qualified members, those on career breaks, those receiving benefits, those working part time, and retired members.

The aim is to provide a seamless transition from our current structures and payment plans to a new single membership with a range of payment plans for members at different stages of their career linked to their income. Membership fees will not be increased during this period.

There will be payment plans for registered nurses, nursing associates, university students, and nursing support workers who are not on the register.

Additionally, we propose payment plans for:

- **Trainees** – such as those being paid to train and work, such as trainee nursing associates and nursing apprentices;
- **Retirees** – former registrants or nursing support workers wishing to retain their RCN membership;
- **Career break and parental leave;**
- **Joint membership** – those who are part of another union or relevant professional body.

### **How does this fit with the way the RCN is governed?**

The RCN is proudly led by members, for members. By which we mean that members of the College are able to vote for the UK-wide governing Council and members of the RCN's two committees – the Professional Nursing Committee and the Trade Union Committee – which set the strategic direction of the organisation, work with staff and are supported to take key decisions.

At present, membership categories and governance arrangements are intrinsically linked. RCN Council has one nurse member representative from each region and country on RCN Council, together with one nursing support worker member and one student member.

The current membership structure was designed at a time when the nursing workforce consisted essentially of three categories: those in full-time nurse education (students); the non-regulated nursing workforce (nursing support workers); and registered nurses. But in 2020, it is increasingly difficult to use these categories to describe every member of the nursing workforce. For example, the NMC now regulates both registered nurses and nursing associates; and individuals undertaking a nurse apprenticeship are both in education and the workplace.

Currently, RCN membership categories and the governance arrangements are intrinsically linked. UK-wide elections are held to elect our governing Council and the Professional Nursing and Trade Union Committees. Each of the groups includes one nurse member for each country and English region (voted for by nurse members), one nursing support worker member (voted for by NSW members) and one student member (voted for by student members).

We are proposing to allow our governance and membership arrangements to enable all members to stand for and vote for the members who serve on the RCN governing Council, Country and Regional boards and the Professional Nursing and Trade Union Committees from their Country or Region.

### 3. Questions to consider

1. Do you agree with the key principles on page 4?
2. Does a single membership deliver those key principles?
3. Do you agree that a range of payment plans linking the amount you pay each year to salary expectations is fair?
4. Do you agree that all members should be able to stand and vote for the members from your Country and Region on the RCN governing Council, your local board and the professional nursing and trade union committees?
5. Do you agree that the President and Deputy President and Chair of Council should continue to be required to be a registered nurse?

# This is me

I'm on a  
register



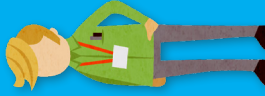
I'm studying  
nursing at  
university



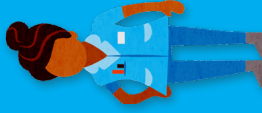
I work in nursing  
but I'm not on  
a register



I'm a nursing  
trainee, being  
paid to work  
and learn



I'm interested  
in joint  
membership  
of the RCN



I used to work  
in nursing, now  
I'm retired



I'm on a  
career break  
from nursing





# There's a dedicated payment plan for all of us

**Registered  
nurse**

**Nursing  
associate**

**Studying nursing  
at university**  
**Studying midwifery  
at university**

**Nursing support  
worker**  
**Health care  
assistant**

**Trainee nursing  
associate**  
**Nursing  
apprenticeship**

**Retired**

**Member of UCU**  
**Member of the RCM**

**On parental leave**  
**On a career break**



# 1. Appendix

## RCN Standing Order

### 5. MEMBERSHIP

#### 5.1 Council

5.2 The Council may admit to membership of the College in its discretion any persons who are:

5.2.1 on a register of persons engaged in nursing

5.2.2 studying to acquire any of the qualifications necessary for them to have their name included on any register established by an Act of Parliament or by licence

5.2.3 admitted to membership on the grounds of distinction in nursing.

5.2.4 engaged in supporting nursing in health and social care as Council may from time to time determine

Provided that the Council may at its discretion decline to admit any person to membership of the College provided that it shall state its reasons in writing and return any subscription paid by any such person.

## Categories of membership

We currently have three categories of membership:

### Nurse members

Those who are on the NMC register, including midwives and those whose registration is lapsed (for example retired members) unless they have been struck off.

### Nursing support workers

Those who are not on a professional register (other than the Northern Ireland Social Care Council or the Scottish Social Services Council) but who work providing health or social care under the supervision of a registered nurse.

### Student members

Those undertaking a pre-registration nursing or midwifery qualification leading to registration with the NMC; nurse cadets or on a return to practice course.

There are different levels of subscriptions:

Health practitioner members pay half the rate of nurse members. The subscriptions paid by both health practitioner members and nurse members are discounted depending on whether:

- you are a newly qualified nurse member or in your first year of health practitioner membership
- you have a joint membership with another union (RCM, UCU or EIS)
- are on a voluntary break
- are an RCN staff member.

Retired members and students pay a flat rate subscription of £10 per year.

Retired members and those on some discounted plans, such as those on voluntary breaks and staff members, are not entitled to the full range of benefits, services and rights of membership.

## Current subscription plans

Type	Rate
<b>Nurse</b>	
First year discount	£98.43
Full	£196.65
Joint educational	£147.64
Joint RCM membership	£98.43
Retired	£10
Voluntary break	£98.43
<b>Nursing support worker</b>	
First year discount	£49.21
Full	£98.43
Retired	£10
Voluntary break	£49.21
<b>Student</b>	
Full	£10

## Current Member Offer

Benefit	Description
<b>Indemnity Scheme</b>	Cover against the financial consequences of a claim against a member's clinical negligence.
<b>Legal and Employment Related Services</b>	<p>Access to RCN's in-house employment relations staff and specialist legal team for advice/representation on workplace issues.</p> <p>Assistance from an expert lawyer for advice/representation on injuries sustained at work or elsewhere for compensation, such as personal injury claim.</p> <p>Access to 30 minutes free legal assistance on non-work matters, including family law.</p> <p>Advice with writing a will, probate, trusts or lasting power of attorneys.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Immigration Services</b>	<p>Access to confidential support and assistance on immigration issues, such as preparing/representation on immigration appeals and visa applications.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Support Services</b>	<p>Confidential advice and support with personal or work-related issues (such as counselling, peer groups, financial assistance etc.).</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>RCN Direct</b>	<p>General support and advice service available over the telephone and online.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Careers Service</b>	<p>One-to-one career advice, help with writing CVs/interview skills and placement support.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Learning resources</b>	<p>Access to books in the RCN libraries, eJournals, eBooks and local learning events.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Nursing Forums</b>	<p>Specialist networking forum for nurses.</p> <p>Available free of charge to members only.</p>
<b>Bulletin Magazine</b>	<p>Hard copies of the magazine are available free of charge to members only (via post).</p> <p>From 1 November 2017, an electronic copy of the magazine is available to members and non-members free of charge.</p>
<b>RCNXtra</b>	<p>Access to exclusive offers and discounts on shopping, cinema trips, mobile phone bills etc.</p> <p>Available to members only.</p>

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes  
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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