

## The commissioning landscape is changing, and nursing roles may be at risk

### Here's what everyone needs to know:

- Earlier this year, the Government announced the merger of NHS England into the Department of Health and Social Care. Across both organisations there will be a 50% reduction in staff.
- Integrated Care Boards (the bodies responsible for planning and funding health and care services for local areas) have also been asked to reduce their running costs by 50%.
- Thousands of registered nurses are employed by NHS England and Integrated Care Boards. Their roles include planning services and patient pathways, supporting clinicians and vaccination programmes, delivering NHS continuing healthcare packages and safeguarding vulnerable groups.
- Nursing staff working for NHS England and Integrated Care Boards are vital to ensuring that the public can access safe and effective healthcare services, provide oversight and design innovative new approaches. Patient safety will be compromised if nursing roles are lost.
- Each of the 42 Integrated Care Boards currently has a Chief Nursing Officer role. These are leadership roles who bring the insight from the nursing profession into strategic decision-making conversations. These roles are at risk. Some Integrated Care Boards are merging with others. Some are introducing a lead clinician role, which will not necessarily be a Registered Nurse.
- Other nursing roles within NHS England and Integrated Care Boards may also be at risk, but since the announcement was made earlier this year, there has been a lack of clear plans or information. This uncertainty is impacting the nursing workforce.
- From the moment these changes were announced by government, the RCN has been engaging with NHS England and the Department of Health and Social Care to represent nursing. We're advocating for members' rights, roles and meeting regularly with those affected. There will still be [national meetings](#) for NHSE members, with ICB member meetings to be held locally.

[\[https://www.rcn.org.uk/employment-and-pay/England-NHS-system-organisations\]](https://www.rcn.org.uk/employment-and-pay/England-NHS-system-organisations)

### What you can do:

- Challenge local proposals which risk diluting the nursing voice and pose risks to patient services. Share any proposals or intel with your local RCN office.
- Call on your local system leaders to publish impact assessments regarding the changes they have proposed. These assessments are vital to identify risks to the nursing workforce and patient safety.
- If local systems leaders are NOT involving staff in decision making, contact your local RCN representatives to voice your concerns. RCN representatives will be meeting with employers in local workplaces and advocating for members, nurses and the nursing profession to influence these changes and need your views and information.
- Ensure you have read our [advice and guidelines](#) on redundancy and reorganisation before making any decisions about your personal situation.

[\[https://www.rcn.org.uk/Get-Help/RCN-advice/redundancy-and-reorganisation\]](https://www.rcn.org.uk/Get-Help/RCN-advice/redundancy-and-reorganisation)

- Contact your MP detailing the value and impact that your role has in their constituency and ask them to hold local system leaders to account.

**You're the expert on nursing. To make your position clear with senior leaders:**

**Be professional**

- Remember, it's important to engage constructively with leaders. So even if you disagree with them, stay respectful and polite.

**Use examples**

- Your experience is our strongest tool in illustrating the value and power of nursing. Now is not the time to underplay the impact nursing has. Use it to ensure that those making decisions have the information they need.
- Use our '*Nursing at the Helm*' report for examples of how this can be done affectively.

**Spread the word**

- Encourage your colleagues to stand with you to speak out for nursing. Talk to your family and friends about what is happening and encourage them to lobby decision makers locally.

For more information check out our guidance: [How to lobby decision makers](#)