



# Equity Diversity and Inclusion Conference



## Conference Brochure

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# Welcome letter

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Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN), welcome to our annual Let's Talk... Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Conference. Today's conference is focused on creating inclusion; in our language, our workplaces, and our nursing practice. This conference is part of a series of events and resources to support you, or members, in how to talk about and tackle the inequalities we see and may experience in our working lives and beyond.

"Equity is our clear ambition; diversity is our underused asset; inclusion is our future" Group Strategy, pg 4

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) impacts on us all in some way, whether directly or indirectly. In our workplaces we may directly face discriminatory behaviours from colleagues and/or patients and service users. Or we may be witness to it. Either way it impacts on us and how we are with each other and our patients. We all have a role to play in ensuring all communities are afforded safe workplaces and communities to live and work in.

We trust that you will find the conference stimulating and informative and that you'll have an opportunity to network with colleagues during the course of the event. We hope you will go away feeling inspired and invigorated and armed with information to share with colleagues in your workplace.

The RCN believes in life-long learning and actively promotes the continuing professional development of nurses. For this reason, certificates of attendance are included in the conference pack and the framework for reflection can be found on the reverse. You are encouraged to contribute attendance at RCN events towards your framework for reflection which can be included in your portfolio.

You will receive an email with a link to the online conference evaluation. We'd be grateful if you would complete this as soon as possible and within seven days of the conference. Your comments and feedback are invaluable in helping us plan future RCN conferences.

We'd like to thank you for supporting this conference and look forward to welcoming you back to future RCN events. A full listing of future events can be found on page 14 of this brochure.

With best wishes, Sophie Ford, Equity and Inclusion Lead, RCN

## Programme at a glance

09.45	Registration, exhibition, networking and refreshments	
10.15	Welcome and housekeeping by Sophie Ford, <i>RCN Equity and Inclusion Lead</i>	
10.20	Opening of the Conference Nicola Ranger, <i>RCN General Secretary and Chief Executive</i>	
10.30	Inclusive language- an interactive practical session, Hayley Bennett, <i>HTVB</i>	
11.30	Refreshments and exhibition viewing	
11.45	Workshops- Creating inclusive workplaces	
	<b>Cowdray Hall</b>	<b>Room 101/102</b>
	Stepping Up As An Inclusive Colleague  Stella Sutcliffe, <i>Inclusive Employers</i>	Tackling Culture Wars in the Workplace: How We Win  Becki Winson and Safiah Fardin, <i>RCN Activism Academy</i>
12.45	Lunch and exhibition viewing	
13.30	Workplace Incivility - Bruno Daniel, <i>RCN Inclusion Programmes Lead</i>	
14.30	Refreshments and exhibition viewing	
14:45	Workshops- Inclusive nursing practice	
	<b>Cowdray Hall</b>	<b>Room 101/102</b>
	Transforming Cultures for Inclusion in Nursing  Jennifer Izekor, <i>Above Difference</i>	The Perpetual Cycle of Racial Bias in Healthcare and Healthcare Education  Vittoria Sorice, <i>Senior Lecturer in Advanced Clinical Practice/Non-Medical Prescribing</i>
15.50	Closing remarks Patricia Mbasani, <i>RCN Chief People Officer</i>	
16.00	Conference close	

## **General information**

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### **Conference enquiries**

Please ask staff on the registration desk if you have any specific requirements regarding access, lost property or have queries regarding your membership.

### **Delegate Badges**

For security purposes, participants must wear their badges at all times. Participants will not be admitted to the conference sessions without the appropriate badge.

### **Programme**

Please refer to the programme for details of the times and locations of all conference sessions. Staff will be on hand to guide you as necessary.

### **Exhibition**

There is an exhibition running alongside this event. These exhibitors have chosen to exhibit at this conference as they feel their products and/or services may be of interest to you. The exhibition also supports the conference, therefore please take the time to go and visit each exhibition stand during the exhibition viewing times.

### **Receipts**

If you require a receipt or have any queries relating to your registration or payment for this event, please contact staff on the registration desk at the event. Alternatively, receipts are also available by contacting RCN Event Registrations direct on 029 2054 6460 between 9.00am and 4.30pm Monday to Friday.

### **Specific requirements**

Please ask at the registration/enquiries desk if you have any specific requirements (e.g. dietary, accessibility etc.)

### **Electronic devices**

Out of courtesy to others, delegates are requested to switch off or set to silent all electronic devices during conference sessions.

### **Liability**

The RCN will not accept any liability for loss or damage to personal effects which may arise as a result of attendance at this event.

### **Continuing Professional Development**

The Royal College of Nursing believes in lifelong learning and actively promotes the continuing professional development of all nurses. Authorised Royal College of Nursing certificates of attendance have been issued to all participants. This event is also subject to the RCN Events quality assurance framework. You should log what you have learnt at this event using the Framework for Reflection guidelines on the back of your certificate and keep this document in your personal professional portfolio.

### **Free information at your fingertips**

The Royal College of Nursing offers a number of FREE online resources with all the latest information and guidance on particular nursing practice issues such as: clinical guidelines, patient safety and eHealth. Visit <http://www.rcn.org.uk/development/practice> for more information.

### **Media partner**

RCNi is the premier provider of innovative and creative information solutions for the whole nursing team and associated health professionals. With 11 nursing journals, including Nursing Standard, RCNi provide health professionals with the latest developments impacting nursing, including changes in policy, practice and research. RCNi also offer a range of digital products including RCNi Learning, an interactive online resource of CPD training modules, and the RCNi Portfolio, an online store and tracking system to help you with revalidation.



### **National conference partner**

LV= General Insurance, one of the UK's largest personal lines insurers, pride themselves in putting customers at the heart of all they do. RCN members can benefit from exclusive\* discounts and savings on a range of LV= insurance products, including Car and Home insurance, for a quote and more information visit [LV.com/RCN](http://LV.com/RCN).

\*Exclusive RCN member discount vs general public prices on [lv.com](http://lv.com) and through the call centre



# Acknowledgement and thanks

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Sophie Ford                      Equity and Inclusion Lead

Wider Equity, Diversity and Inclusion team

Events management team

Kim Hawley                      Events Organiser, RCN Events

Millie Shepherd-Gill              Events and Marketing Administrator, RCN Events

Anna Gray                      Corporate Events Manager, RCN Events

## **Plenary speaker abstracts**

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**Sophie Ford, Equity and Inclusion Lead, RCN**

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**Conference Chair**

**Biography:**

Sophie Ford (she/her) is a Diversity and Inclusion Specialist who has joined the RCN Equity and Inclusion Team to support the implementation of the member facing EDI strategy in 2024. Sophie joined the RCN with a wealth of experience leading workforce and patient EDI within an NHS trust and within the wider public and private sectors previously with a background working in operational HR.

She won the NHE East Midlands Leadership Academy Award, Inclusive Leader of the year, in 2014 for her work on leading the procurement of a fit for purpose interpretation and translation service to ensure all patients were able to access the required services when needed through communicating in a language they understood, particularly in urgent care, as well as supporting the staff networks.

Sophie led her Trust twice to be a Top 100 Stonewall Workplace Equality Index employer from being ranked 285th in 2015 to 77th in 2019, and 68th in 2024.

**Professor Nicola Ranger, General Secretary & Chief Executive, RCN**

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**Biography:**

Professor Nicola Ranger joined the Royal College of Nursing in December 2022 as the Chief Nursing Officer. In 2024 she was appointed General Secretary and Chief Executive of the RCN. She was previously Chief Nurse and Executive Director of Midwifery at King's College Hospital NHS Foundation Trust in London. Before that, she held Chief Nurse posts at both Brighton and Sussex University Hospitals NHS Trust and Frimley Health NHS Foundation Trust.

She has also held a number of senior nursing roles at University College London Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust and Surrey and Sussex Healthcare NHS Trust. Earlier in her career, she worked at America's George Washington University Hospital in Washington and at Mount Sinai Medical Centre in New York.



**Talk Title:** Inclusive Language

**Summary:** This interactive session equips participants with practical tools to navigate equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI) conversations in the workplace and in patient care. Beginning with the creation of a brave space, the workshop explores why EDI topics can feel difficult to raise and introduces the importance of inclusive language. Participants will engage in polls, discussions and scenario-based exercises that highlight common terms, practical language swaps and strategies for self-advocacy.

Attendees will also be introduced to a set of techniques, phrases and questions they can apply immediately to support respectful interactions and protect their wellbeing. The session balances reflection with action, giving participants both the confidence and the vocabulary to address sensitive issues constructively.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify and explain the importance of inclusive language, including recognising terms that may be harmful or exclusionary.
2. Apply at least three practical strategies (phrases, language swaps or questions) to navigate sensitive interactions with patients, colleagues or managers.
3. Demonstrate increased confidence in advocating for themselves and supporting the wellbeing of others when faced with challenging EDI conversations.

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. Video by John Lewis Partnership (It's not OK):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rf2uL5QIT00> ALL The Little Things (Short Film) <https://vimeo.com/641858990> <https://charitydigital.org.uk/topics/six-ways-to-get-people-using-inclusive-language-10709>

**Biography:**

Hayley Bennett (she/her) is a renowned consultant, strategist and advocate for inclusion who is the Director of HTVB. She has a distinctive approach that combines world-class business strategies with the competitive edge of sport. Hayley has worked with leading global brands in both the sports and corporate sectors, creating strategies that build winning teams - on and off the pitch.

Her expertise has been featured in numerous high-profile media, including BBC Sport, The Washington Post, and The Telegraph. Hayley is also well-known for her work on the popular TV show Love Island, where she educated contestants on inclusion.

**Talk Title:** Tackling Culture Wars in the Workplace: How We Win

**Summary:** For the past few years, there has been an alarming rise in racism and other forms of prejudice. Nursing staff, patients and communities as a whole are being hugely impacted by this, on a day-to-day basis. This session will provide updates on the RCN's activity around this and provide a discussion space for participants to explore what steps can be taken in the workplace - not just to safeguard against discrimination, but to actively defeat it.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand the RCN response to incidents of discrimination and prejudice.
2. Understand steps they may take in the workplace to tackle different forms of prejudice.
3. The importance of tackling culture wars.

**Biography:**

Becki Winson is Lead for Activist Communities at the RCN, working in the Activism Academy. She has a background in trade union and community organising, particularly on housing inequalities, precarious workers rights, and equalities issues.

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**Stella Sutcliffe, Senior Relationship Manager, Inclusive Employers**

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**Talk Title:** Stepping Up As An Inclusive Colleague

**Summary:** This practical workshop helps healthcare professionals foster inclusion and address discrimination in their everyday work. Participants will explore how to make a difference at three levels: in their own actions, in their relationships with others, and within their organisation. The session starts by looking at the current state of EDI in the UK. We'll then focus on managing your own emotions and stress when you witness or experience discrimination. Participants will learn how to have difficult conversations while respecting different viewpoints. Using realistic scenarios we will practice how to step in and support colleagues. This is a practical workshop suitable for everyone, regardless of their current knowledge of EDI.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Understand your own reactions to discrimination and how to stay calm.
2. Have challenging conversations with confidence and respect.
3. Identify practical actions you can take as an individual, with colleagues, and within your workplace.

**Biography:**

Stella Sutcliffe is a diversity and inclusion strategist and has delivered training and projects for members of Inclusive Employers for six years.

Stella has multi-sector experience, having worked across education, charity, town planning and urban regeneration, engineering, banking and finance, universities and local and central government departments.

She runs her own gender equity campaign and has spoken on BBC 4's Woman's Hour on the topic of 'Inclusive Language'. She has been a guest lecturer for MBA students on the topic of Diversity and Inclusion in Business and features on We Are The City's 'Influential Women' list.

**Bruno Daniel, Inclusion Programme Lead, RCN**

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**Talk Title:** Workplace Incivility

**Summary:** Workplace Incivility and Compassionate Leadership!

Get ready to dive into an interactive and hands-on experience that goes beyond the basics! In this session, we'll collaboratively unpack the nuances of workplace incivility and its effects.

We'll also explore the principles of compassionate leadership (West, 2021) and how fostering empathic concern can transform our work environments. Through lively discussions, and practical exercises, you'll not only enhance your understanding of incivility but also gain valuable tools to lead with compassion and create a more respectful and supportive workplace.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Recognising and understanding workplace incivilities.
2. Understand the impact of workplace incivilities.
3. Develop some hints and tips to manage incivility in the workplace

**Biography:**

Bruno served in the Royal Navy for 24 years. On leaving the service he joined Devon Fire and Rescue Service as their Fairness at Work Advisor. In 2005 he managed the Race for Opportunity initiative across the Southwest of England and Wales before joining the NHS in 2007 as Head of Equality and Diversity, spending nine years in the NHS. In 2016, Bruno was appointed as a Senior Regional Officer with the Royal College of Nursing is now the Inclusion Programme Lead for the RCN managing the delivery of the Cultural Ambassadors and the Inclusive Leadership programmes.

**Jennifer Izekor, Lead for Activist Communities, Above Difference Limited**

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**Talk Title:** Transforming Cultures for Inclusion in Nursing

**Summary:** This one-hour exploratory session invites nurses, midwives, and nursing leaders to pause, reflect, and think differently about what it means to create cultures where everyone can belong and thrive.

Drawing on themes from Cultural Intelligence and inclusive, values-led leadership, the session will help participants gently examine how everyday behaviours, assumptions, and team dynamics shape the experience of staff and patients. Through storytelling and guided reflection, we will explore:

- What “inclusive culture” really means in the context of nursing today.
- How Cultural Intelligence can help us work well across differences — visible and invisible.
- The small but intentional leadership choices that contribute to psychological safety and trust.
- How each of us, whatever our role, influences the culture we are part of.

Rather than offering fixed answers, this workshop opens up space for honest conversation, curiosity, and personal insight — encouraging participants to consider what inclusion looks like in their own teams and what one meaningful step they might take next.

#### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify at least two cultural or behavioural factors within their team environment that can influence inclusion, belonging, and staff wellbeing.
2. Describe how Cultural Intelligence (CQ) can support nurses and midwives to work effectively across differences and respond more intentionally to diverse staff and patient needs.
3. Explain one practical, values-led action they can take within their own sphere of influence to help create a more inclusive and psychologically safe team culture.

#### **Recommended reading list/references:**

1. Leading with Cultural Intelligence by David Livermore

#### **Biography:**

Jennifer Izekor is the CEO and Founder of Above Difference, a leadership and culture transformation consultancy specialising in Cultural Intelligence, inclusive leadership, and values-led organisational change. Over the past seven years, she has worked with more than 6,000 public-sector leaders across the NHS, policing, local government, and the wider public sector. An executive coach, speaker, and former senior public-sector leader, Jennifer is known for her compassionate, thought-provoking approach and her belief that when leaders lead well, they lead all their people well. Her programmes are recognised nationally for transforming cultures and enabling lasting, meaningful change.

**Talk Title:** The Perpetual Cycle of Racial Bias in Healthcare and Healthcare Education

**Summary:** This systematic review investigated racial bias in healthcare and healthcare education to identify patterns, evaluate their impact, and explore strategies to improve equity. Following PRISMA guidelines, four major databases (PubMed, Cochrane, EMBASE, and CINAHL) were searched, supplemented by backward and forward snowballing. After rigorous multi-reviewer screening and data extraction, 45 studies were included from an initial pool of 1634 records.

Analysis revealed five interconnected themes: bias in healthcare access and provision, perceived discrimination and medical mistrust, provider stereotyping, inequities in education and training, and underrepresentation in healthcare literature and imagery. Together, these themes form a self-reinforcing cycle of bias that affects patients, students, and practitioners alike.

Among the findings, racial disparities were evident in maternal and infant care, chronic disease management, and emergency treatment. In education, the lack of racial diversity in teaching materials further entrenched implicit bias, limiting providers' preparedness to deliver equitable care.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Critically analyse and categorise the types of racial bias identified in healthcare delivery and healthcare education, as presented in the systematic review.
2. Evaluate the impact of racial bias on healthcare practitioners, students, and patients using evidence and case examples from the review, demonstrating this understanding through discussion or scenario analysis.
3. Propose evidence-based strategies to reduce racial bias and advance health equity in both clinical and educational settings, drawing directly on the systematic review's recommendations and evaluated interventions by the conclusion of the session.

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. FitzGerald, C. and Hurst, S. (2017). Implicit Bias in Healthcare Professionals: a Systematic Review. *BMC Medical Ethics*, 18(1). doi:<https://doi.org/10.1186/s12910-017-0179-8>.
2. Hall, W.J., Chapman, M.V., Lee, K.M., Merino, Y.M., Thomas, T.W., Payne, B.K., Eng, E., Day, S.H. and Coyne-Beasley, T. (2015). Implicit Racial/Ethnic Bias Among Health Care Professionals and its Influence on Health Care Outcomes: A Systematic Review. *American Journal of Public Health*, 105(12), pp.60–76. doi:<https://doi.org/10.2105/ajph.2015.302903>
3. Sorice, V., Mortimore, G., Faghy, M., Sorice, R. and Tegally, D. (2025). The Perpetual Cycle of Racial Bias in Healthcare and Healthcare Education: A

### **Biography:**

Vittoria is an Advanced Clinical Practitioner and a Senior Lecturer in postgraduate programmes at the University of Derby, teaching advanced practice skills. With over a decade of nursing experience in the UK and abroad, Vittoria has made notable contributions to clinical research, including leading pivotal studies during the COVID-19 pandemic. This work earned her team a Chief Nurse Officer Silver Award and launched her as a published author. She addresses racial bias in healthcare and education through research and teaching, integrating her clinical expertise to enhance patient care and advance healthcare education.

### **Patricia Mbasani, Chief People Officer, RCN**

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### **Biography:**

Patricia has many years of experience in large and medium-sized, complex public, education, and charity organisations.

She has increased efficiency and effectiveness through her leadership and ability to successfully champion EDI across several organisations, most recently at Royal Trinity Hospice as Director of HR & OD. There she championed an inclusive and empowering organisational culture with an ambitious and dynamic people plan and a sector leading EDI programme.

Director-level experience has involved shaping corporate strategy, talent development programmes and managing complex projects. Patricia was previously Director of HR at Shooting Star Children's Hospices and Head of HR at MS Society. Patricia is a fellow of the CIPD and has a postgraduate MSc in Public Service Management.

## Exhibitors

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Independent Health and Social Care (IHSC)

RCN Library

RCN Inclusion Programme

RCN Member Support Services

Inclusive Employers

Above Difference

## Future RCN Events

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Date	Event	Location
14 March	RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Conference	RCN HQ, London
15 – 16 April	RCN Education Forum Conference	University of Exeter
29 April	RCN Management and Leadership Conference	RCN HQ, London
17 June	RCN Long Term Conditions Conference	Sheffield Hallam University
24 June	RCN Neuroscience Forum Conference	RCN HQ, London
15 – 17 September	RCN International Nursing Research Conference	Strathclyde University, Glasgow