

# RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Conference 2026

Shaping the future of ophthalmic nursing  
through the four pillars of practice



Saturday 14 March 2026

RCN HQ, London

# Contents

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Welcome letter.....	3
Programme at a glance.....	4
General information.....	6
Plenary speaker abstracts .....	9
Supporters.....	16
Exhibitors .....	17
Future RCN Events .....	18

# Welcome letter

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Dear Colleague,

On behalf of the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) and the RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum, welcome to the RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Conference 2026.

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.

RCN staff and committee members are also on hand to answer any queries you may have regarding your membership. Or if you're a non-member, they can inform you of the many benefits of joining the RCN. As a member, you can join any number of the RCN Forums. Forums have active Facebook groups that provide you with the opportunity to connect with colleagues and keep up to date on current practice related issues.

The RCN has professional forums across the diverse nursing arena and RCN members can join as many of these forums as they wish. With 202105 forum members, forum membership is set to continue to rise. Forums are a huge area of influence and direction for the RCN and are a valuable opportunity to network with colleagues around the UK and be involved in:

- consultation responses
- conferences, events and workshops
- forum-led publications.

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 26 of your conference programme.

With best wishes,  
Tendai Gwenhure, RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair

## Programme at a glance

9.00	<b>Registration, exhibition, networking and refreshments</b>
9.30	<p><b>Chair's opening remarks</b> Tendai Gwenhure, RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair</p>
9.45	<p><b>The NMC Review of Advanced Practice- what does additional regulation mean for Ophthalmic Nurses</b> Paula McLaren, Senior Nursing Adviser for Advanced Practice, Nursing and Midwifery Council</p>
10.15	<p><b>Nurse empowerment and influential leadership in the workplace</b> Rebecca Turner, Ophthalmology Consultant Nurse &amp; Clinical Director (interim), Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust</p>
10.45	<b>Refreshments and exhibition viewing</b>
11.15	<p><b><i>Medical legal issues: ethical considerations of practice</i></b> Alyson Hardie, Clinical Governance and Risk Practitioner, Oxford University Foundation Trust</p>
11.45	<p><b>Collaborate for Good "The Eye Care Support Pathway"</b> Jay Vasani, Partnerships and Development Manager, RNIB and Bhavini Makwana, Campaigns &amp; Projects Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust</p>
12.15	<b>Lunch and exhibition viewing</b>
13.15	<p><b>Welcome back</b> Catherine Garrott, Senior Nurse Medical Retina, Kings Colege Hospital</p>
13.20	<p><b>Diverse roles in ophthalmic nursing followed by a panel Q&amp;A</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Advancing Corneal Care</b>, Noel Binza, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist, Kings College Hospital</li> <li>• <b>Glaucoma Care at Scale: Why Nurse Specialists Matter</b>, Carolyn Ford, Glaucoma Nurse Specialist, St Thomas' Hospital</li> <li>• <b>Transforming Lives through Oculoplastics</b>, Nicola Dunlop</li> <li>• <b>Uveitis &amp; the Specialist Nurse's Role</b>, Teresa Julieta Lumanisakio, Paediatric, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Uveitis,</li> </ul>

	<p>Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Richard Desmond Children's eye Centre</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Evolving Vitreo-Retinal Services</b>, Yvonne Kana, Nurse Consultant, Moorfields Eye Hospital</li> <li>• <b>Enhancing Ophthalmic Care for Patients with Cognitive and Functional Diversity</b> – Ali Northover, Matron, Ophthalmology, Oxford Eye Hospital</li> </ul>
<b>14.35</b>	<b>Refreshments and exhibition viewing</b>
<b>15.00</b>	<p><b>Career pathway/progression in Ophthalmic Nursing – Enablers and challenges, post graduate opportunities and apprenticeship integration, education and training for junior colleagues</b></p> <p>Tendai Gwenhure, RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair</p>
<b>15.30</b>	<p><b>Journey from internationally educated nurse to doctorate level studies</b></p> <p>Paulo Pengson, Nurse, Moorfields Eye Hospital A&amp;E</p>
<b>16.00</b>	<p><b>Closing remarks</b></p> <p>Tendai Gwenhure, RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair</p>
<b>16.05</b>	<b>Conference close</b>

# 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.

### **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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## RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum

Tendai Gwenhure	RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair
Rebecca Turner	Ophthalmology Consultant Nurse & Clinical Director (interim), Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust
Catherine Garrott	Senior Nurse Medical Retina, Kings College Hospital

## Events management team

Liz Savage	Events Organiser, RCN Events
Millie Shepherd-Gill	Events and Marketing Administrator, RCN Events

## Plenary speaker abstracts

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**Paula McLaren, Senior Adviser for Advanced Practice, The Nursing and Midwifery Council**

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**Talk Title:** The NMC Review of Advanced Practice- what does additional regulation mean for Ophthalmic Nurses

**Summary:** The session will provide an overview of the work the NMC is doing to develop additional regulation for nurses and midwives working at an advanced level of practice. It will outline the workstreams and implications for nurses working in specialisms such as ophthalmic nursing, as well as how professionals can engage with the NMC to help shape the work.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. To outline the NMC's review of advanced practice to date.
2. To outline the evidence base for the development of additional regulation.
3. To debate the implications for their own professional practice, including opportunities and challenges.

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. <https://www.nmc.org.uk/standards/future-standards/advanced-practice-review/>

**Biography:**

Paula is a registered general nurse and is Senior Adviser for Advanced Practice leading the NMCs review of advanced practice. Paula also leads the prescribing portfolio at the NMC and continues to work clinically as a Nurse Consultant in General Practice.

Paula has worked in a variety of roles within secondary care, primary and community services, higher education, transformation, research, policy and regulation. Paula has been involved in the development of GP Federations and Training Hubs in England, as well as setting up an early version of what is now social prescribing in developing research practices to improve access and patient outcomes across North London.

More recently Paula's roles have focussed on the quality of learning environments and now the NMC review of advanced practice, moving into phase 2 to develop and finalise approaches to the additional regulation of advanced nursing and midwifery practice.

**Rebecca Turner, Ophthalmology Clinical Director & Consultant Nurse, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust**

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**Talk Title:** Nurse empowerment & influential leadership in the workplace

**Summary:** Key takeaway message: senior leadership roles at Director level in Healthcare are within the reach of Ophthalmic nurses. This presentation uses examples from current practice to describe the key elements of empowerment and leadership and to inspire delegates to maximise future leadership opportunities.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Define (Nurse) empowerment
2. Describe influential leadership
3. Outline key strategies for surviving a senior leadership role

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. Armstrong M (2003) A Handbook of human resource management practice Kogan Page London Kanter
2. Rosabeth Moss (2008) . Men and women of the corporation: New edition. Basic books. A.S. Wharton, Mountain View
3. California Gilgeous V (1997) Operations and the Management of Change Prentice Hall London

**Biography:**

Rebecca is the current interim Clinical Director for Ophthalmology at the Oxford University Hospitals NHS Trust. She is also a current member of the RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum. She currently holds the post of Consultant Nurse in Oxford and has held many senior leadership roles within the service. She is a fierce advocate for Advanced Practice and has spent the majority of her career within Ophthalmology.

**Alyson Hardie, Clinical Governance and Risk Practitioner, Oxford University Foundation Trust**

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**Talk Title:** Medical legal issues: ethical considerations of practice

**Summary:** Broad overview of how legal cases has shaped practice; consent; capacity; duty of candour responsibilities; covert recordings.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Have a greater understanding of informed consent, capacity, duty of candour; documentation and how the focus has shifted from medical paternalism to patient autonomy, potential impact of new AI equipment such as smart glasses.

**Biography:**

Qualified as an SRN in 1981. Travelled and nursed in Sydney, Australia. On return to the UK, started career in Adult ITU, Oxford. Nursed in Switzerland for 2 years. Left nursing to undertake a Law and Anthropology degree. Went to law school and qualified as a solicitor. Moved to Poland, The Netherlands and then to Colorado and undertook a return to nursing

practice course there, got my RN qualification. Returned to the UK and became a Legal Advisor at OUH, then moved to current role as Lead CGRP.

**Jay Vasani, Partnerships and Development Manager, RNIB and Bhavini Makwana, Campaigns & Projects Manager, Thomas Pocklington Trust**

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**Talk Title:** Collaborate for Good “The Eye Care Support Pathway”

**Noel Binza, Senior Clinical Nurse Specialist, Kings College Hospital**

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**Talk Title:** Advancing Corneal Care

**Carolyn Ford, Glaucoma Nurse Specialist, St Thomas' Hospital**

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**Talk Title:** Glaucoma Care at Scale: Why Nurse Specialists Matter

**Summary:** The evolving role of the glaucoma nurse specialist from traditional supportive role to advanced autonomous practitioner role to help tackle increasing demands on eye care. Encouraging nurses to diversify and extend their current roles.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. The knowledge and skills required for this role with patient safety being paramount.
2. The need for nurses to expand their current roles to meet the challenge of tackling the ever increasing health care demands in ophthalmology.

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. Garrett, K (2024) General Debate: Glaucoma and community optometry, Research Briefing, Published Monday, 29 April, 2024- House of Commons Library
2. Millar L, “People ‘needlessly going blind’ due to glaucoma waiting lists, say politicians” Optometry Today 12 October 2022
3. Change in waiting lists by clinical specialty since January 2020 (2024) Published on 29 February 2024, Change in waiting lists by clinical specialty since January 2020 | Institute for Fiscal Studies

**Biography:**

Carolyn Ford is a Glaucoma Nurse Specialist at St Thomas' Eye Department. Carolyn has 25 years experience working in glaucoma clinics holds a Degree in Glaucoma Management, Masters in Advanced Nurse Practice and Nonmedical Prescribing

qualification. Carolyn is passionate about patients receiving the best quality of care and always striving to improve patient experience.

## **Nicola Dunlop, Adnexal Nurse Consultant, Moorfields Eye Hospital**

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**Talk Title:** Transforming Lives through Oculoplastics

**Summary:** Oculoplastics nursing has transformed the lives of many patients and nurses. Although, it can be considered a new field within ophthalmic nursing its impact monumental. Within this speciality the first botulinum toxin nurse-led service at Moorfields Eye Hospital was developed to provide treatment and care for various conditions, including the rare condition benign essential blepharospasm. This branch of ophthalmic nursing provides support for patients with everyday nuisances such as eyelid lesions and watering of the eyes. The first nurse-led minor surgery was developed at Moorfields Eye Hospital in 2008. In addition the first UK Nurse-led Lacrimal Service was developed in 2018. Most importantly cancers of the adnexa eyelid, lacrimal and orbital areas now have there care streamline. Oculoplastic nursing supports the patient painful and devastating journey of losing an eye. It addresses the ophthalmic impact from the general health co-morbidity of thyroid disorders resultant visual loss and the distressing facial appearance such as proptosis and myxoedema. Currently national training courses were developed for oculoplastic nurses. In addition, Oculoplastic nursing is now featured nationally and internationally for the care, treatment, training, education and research it provides to transform lives.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Conditions cared for by oculoplastic nurses
2. The education and training available for nurses wishing to develop oculoplastic skills
3. How lives are transformed through oculoplastic nursing

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

1. Colour Atlas of Ophthalmic Plastic Surgery 2001. J R. O Collin, Anthony G. Tyers. Global Oculoplastics

### **Biography:**

Dr Nicola Dunlop is a Nurse Consultant at Moorfield Eye Hospital. She commenced her ophthalmic nursing studies at Moorfields Eye Hospital in 1998. She lead a team of excellent nurses and shares her expertise presenting nationally and internationally. She runs a National Oculoplastic, Botulinum toxin and Lacrimal Study Day. Dr Nicola Dunlop has numerous publications.

She is a RCN Learning Representative. She was previously on the RCN Ophthalmic Forum Steering Committee Board. During that time, she led the RCN ophthalmic library exhibition, Older People Sight-loss and Early Detection & Action Workshops in England, Scotland Wales and Ireland and wrote the publication: Older People and Driving.

In her professional career she has pioneered the first nurse-led services at Moorfields Eye Hospital in Botulinum toxin. She became the first nurse to undertake Minor Surgery 2005. She has introduced Post-Operative Clinics, Virtual Histology Reporting Service. During Covid she was the first nurse to run a nurse practitioner clinic on Attend Anywhere and has since pioneered a Virtual Lacrimal Clinic and a Remote Clinic for eye dystonia. She is research focus and has won many awards in her field. She leads as a principle and sub-principle investigators on various research studies.

**Teresa Julieta Lumanisakio, Paediatric, Clinical Nurse Specialist for Uveitis, Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust, Richard Desmond Children's eye Centre**

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**Talk Title:** Uveitis & the Specialist Nurse's Role

**Yvonne Kana, Nurse consultant, Moorfields Eye Hospital**

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**Talk Title:** Evolving Vitreo Retinal Services

**Summary:** The vitreo retinal surgical speciality provides the modern ophthalmic nurse with opportunities to train, develop and implement advanced practice skills to provide enhanced patient care and pathways. Nurses care deeply about their patients well being and they want to deliver high quality care. The more we as leaders can align our nurses work with their values, the more likely they are to feel passion for their work. This presentation will provide an overview of how our nursing roles within a busy vitreo retinal service have evolved and how we continue to meet the changing needs of patients through education, training and patient engagement.

**Learning Outcomes:**

1. Identify nurse-led opportunities within a vitreo retinal service.
2. Improve their knowledge on how audit can support their roles and development.
3. Promote the role of ophthalmic nurses with vitreo retinal services to stakeholders /patients to develop future practice within local areas.

**Recommended reading list/references:**

1. Chan, E.W.; Yang, E.; Eldeeb, M.; Bainbridge, J.W.; da Cruz, L.; Sullivan, P.S.; Muqit, M.M.; Charteris, D.G.; Minihan, M.; Ezra, E.; et al. Contemporary Outcomes and Prognostic Factors of 23-Gauge Vitrectomy for Retained Lens Fragments After Phacoemulsification. *Am. J. Ophthalmol.* 2020, 219, 271–283Hu, J.Y.; Ti, S.E.; Chee, S.P. Risk factors affecting visual outcomes following dropped nucleus after cataract surgery. *Eye* 2023, 38, 253–258. [Google Scholar] [CrossRef]

## **Biography:**

Yvonne started her ophthalmic nursing journey as a newly qualified nurse from Ireland , coming over to Moorfields in 1996 . She was a pioneer of the first nurse practitioner services with the accident and emergency unit at Moorfields , completing her MSc in Advanced Ophthalmic Practice with City university in 2013 . She took up the role of nurse practitioner within the Vitreo Retinal Service in 2006 , establishing the first nurse led Nd:YAG laser, new patient , and stable monitoring clinics . She is a Florence Nightingale scholar having achieved her leadership award in 2020 and became a nurse consultant in 2021. As a nurse leader , she is most passionate about developing the next generation of nurses fit for the future workplace through education, training and support to meet the ever growing challenges of modern ophthalmology.

## **Ali Northover, Matron, Oxford Eye Hospital, Oxford University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust**

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**Talk Title:** Enhancing Ophthalmic Care for Patients with Cognitive and Functional Diversity

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Recognise the specific challenges faced by ophthalmic patients with functional and cognitive diversity.
2. Apply practical, person-centred adjustments to improve accessibility and patient experience
3. Demonstrate confidence in compassionate communication and multidisciplinary collaboration

## **Tendai Gwenhure, RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum Chair**

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**Talk Title:** Career pathway/progression in Ophthalmic Nursing – Enablers and challenges, post graduate opportunities and apprenticeship integration, education and training for junior colleagues

## **Paulo Pengson, Nurse, Moorfields Eye Hospital A&E**

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**Talk Title:** Journey from internationally educated nurse to doctorate level studies

**Summary:** In this presentation, I share my journey as an internationally educated nurse, from qualifying in the Philippines to working within the UK NHS and developing an interest in clinical academic nursing. Rather than presenting a straightforward success story, I reflect on the realities of transition, including financial strain, uncertainty, cultural adjustment, and entering the NHS during the COVID-19 pandemic with limited

structured support. I describe my early clinical experiences in acute hospital settings across two healthcare systems and the challenges of adapting to new policies, and professional expectations during a period of crisis. I also discuss my transition into ophthalmic nursing, a specialty that required rebuilding confidence and skills, and how this experience deepened my empathy for patients and colleagues navigating unfamiliar systems. The presentation explores how mentorship, exposure to research, leadership development, quality improvement work, and advocacy shaped my professional direction. Through practical examples, I highlight the contributions internationally educated nurses can make when their prior experience is recognised and they are supported to grow beyond survival roles.

### **Learning Outcomes:**

1. Describe at least three common professional, emotional, and systemic challenges experienced by internationally educated nurses during transition into the NHS, based on real-world clinical examples.
2. Explain how mentorship, structured support, and recognition of prior experience can influence retention, confidence, and career progression for internationally educated nurses.
3. Identify two practical actions that educators, leaders, or teams can implement to better support internationally educated nurses' transition, professional development, and contribution to service improvement.

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

1. World Health Organization (2020). State of the World's Nursing 2020: Investing in Education, Jobs and Leadership.
2. The NHS Long Term Plan.
3. National Institute for Health and Care Research (2022). Developing clinical academic careers in nursing and midwifery.

### **Biography:**

I am an Ophthalmic Nurse with several years of experience in eye casualty, currently working at Moorfields Eye Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. My career bridges clinical practice, research, and innovation, with a passion for improving patient care through technology, quality improvement, and sustainability. I have developed expertise in ophthalmic emergency care, medication management, and research-led service innovation. My work has included leading a Quality Improvement project to reduce patient waiting-time complaints through an audio broadcast system, and spearheading a sustainability initiative. As a FNF Green Healthcare Leadership and Sustainability Alumni, Internationally educated nurse NCL ambassador and a Nursing Times Awards 2025 – Anne Shuttleworth Rising Star Finalist, I'm deeply committed to advancing nursing practice and shaping the future of healthcare delivery. My long-term goal is to pursue a PhD exploring digital transformation and artificial intelligence in healthcare, with a focus on bridging ophthalmology, nursing, and digital health innovation. I aim to contribute to the development of smart, data-driven solutions that empower clinicians, enhance patient outcomes, and promote sustainable, equitable care within the NHS and beyond.

# Supporters

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## Retina UK Professionals Conference

Join colleagues from across the eye-health and sight-loss sector at the Retina UK Professionals Conference on **18 September**, held at the **Edgbaston Park Hotel and Conference Centre, Birmingham**, from **10:00–15:30**. This **CPD-accredited, hybrid** event is open to practitioners, clinicians, researchers, and professionals across the sight-loss sector, offering a day of learning, collaboration, and practical insight.

The morning programme features expert-led sessions on genetics, lived experience, creating safe environments for difficult conversations, and emerging wearable technologies. Delegates will also have opportunities to explore exhibition stands and network with peers.

In the afternoon, **in-person attendees** will take part in **profession-specific CPD workshop sessions**, more information on these is available on our website. Other in person attendees will continue to access the main room session, which will also be streamed live.

Whether you work directly with individuals and families or contribute to research, service development, or education, the Retina UK Professionals Conference provides a valuable opportunity to deepen your knowledge, strengthen connections, and take away actionable ideas for your practice.

You can sign up for the event at [retinauk.org.uk/event/professionals-conference/](https://retinauk.org.uk/event/professionals-conference/)

# Exhibitors

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We'd like to thank our exhibitors who support our conference.

**Altomed**

**Santen**

**Scope Eyecare**

**Spectrum**

**MISS Ophthalmics**

*RCN Library*

*RCNLearn*

*RCN events are sponsored by our industry partners by way of exhibition booths. Industry partners have not influenced the rest of the event's educational content or the choice of speakers. The following companies have supported the RCN Flight Nursing Conference 2026 but have not had any input into the agenda, content or materials of the event: Altomed, Santen, Scope Eyecare, Spectrum, MISS Ophthalmics.*

## Future RCN Events

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Date	Event	Location
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
8 July	RCN Acute Care Symposium	RCN HQ, London
15 – 17 September	RCN International Nursing Research Conference	Strathclyde University, Glasgow
22 September	RCN Pain and Palliative Conference	RCN HQ, London
26 September	RCN Travel Health Conference	Virtual
6 October	RCN Retired Members' Conference	RCN HQ, London
15 October	RCN Fertility Conference	RCN HQ, London
17 November	RCN Nurse Led Innovations Conference	RCN HQ