

RCN Congress 2026, Liverpool ACC Arena

Monday 18th May – Thursday 21st May

Advanced Nurse Practitioner (ANP) Forum Committee Report

ANP Forum members attending congress:

Adele Parsons (Vice-Chair), Jenny Riley, Katie Brown, Mithun Thampi & Joanna Das



The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Congress is the largest gathering of nursing professionals in the UK.

The event serves as a major platform for professional development, networking, and campaigning.

This report is from the Advanced Nurse Practitioner Forum members who attended Congress as voting members and outlines how they represented membership of the forum at congress.

ANP Steering Forum members with: Carmel O’Boyle (chair of council), Nicola Ranger (General Secretary and Chief Executive) and Alison Leary (Deputy President)

RCN General Secretary and Chief Executive Professor Nicola Ranger delivered a powerful and rallying keynote speech, calling on government to provide fair recognition of nursing expertise, appropriate remuneration for nursing skills, and urgent action on immigration policies affecting the nursing workforce. Importantly, Nicola spoke directly and passionately about the role of advanced nurse practitioners (ANPs), at a time when the profession is facing increasing external scrutiny.

Referring to recent survey findings published by the British Medical Association (BMA), in which doctors expressed concerns regarding advanced practitioners undertaking work traditionally associated with medical roles and potential implications for patient safety, Nicola firmly challenged this narrative describing herself as “shocked and disappointed” by the comments and stated: “The last thing patients need is any one profession putting doubt on the skill and the safety of another.”

Nicola reinforced the significant level of expertise, education, clinical experience, and accountability required to practise in advanced nursing roles. She strongly advocated for professional identity and recognition, reminding delegates that advanced nurse practitioners bring a unique combination of nursing values, holistic care, and advanced clinical capability. Her message was both affirming and empowering: “You don’t sort out your problems by diminishing another profession.” She encouraged nurses working in advanced roles to be proud of their qualifications, nursing background, and years of

experience, emphasising that the RCN stands beside and behind them across all four nations. Her call for practitioners to “wear your nursing title with pride” delivered a clear and united message that advanced nurse practitioners are valued, respected, and integral to the future of healthcare delivery.

Forum events attended:

Meet the Advanced Nurse Practitioner Forum – Katie Brown, Mithun Thampi, Joanna Das and Adele Parsons

Congress is an ideal opportunity to meet fellow advanced nurse practitioners or speak with those aspiring to advanced practice in the future and two events at congress focussed specifically on this area.



Photo: Mithun & Katie, ANP Forum Committee members at the busy Forum stand with members who have come along to meet the committee

Meet the RCN Forums – represented by Mithun Thampi

Feedback from members who visited the stand:

- Would like to see guidance on how to transition to advanced level practice
- Would like to see some webinars with advanced practice content
- Critical of current forum webpage
 - New platform NEST later in 2026
- Conference details not easy to locate on the forum page
- Lot of queries about how we are responding to the BMA
- Discussion around regulation and what this could look like

These items will contribute to the working priorities of the forum.



Photo: Mithun, ANP Forum Committee member at the RCN Forums event for members

Debates

Debates at RCN Congress are decided by RCN members and are representative of all areas of nursing and current issues within nursing. Suggested items are submitted by members, forums, branches, or committees prior to Congress. The items are reviewed by the Congress Agenda Committee, to ensure a comprehensive final agenda for Congress. The ANP Forum Committee submitted an item around student nurse placements in primary care, independent and social sector areas. However, this was not accepted onto the agenda, owing to a similar item submitted. Instead, we made sure to speak to this agenda item.

In 2026, 23 agenda items were selected for discussion. These may be submitted as resolutions, which are formally debated and voted on by accredited voting members, or as discussion items, which are intended to stimulate professional debate, share perspectives, and influence future direction without a formal vote taking place. Additional emergency agenda items were also accepted during Congress in response to emerging professional, workforce, or political issues requiring urgent discussion or action.

Here are the debates where forum members spoke on your behalf:

Advanced nursing practice

Resolution submitted by RCN Council

That this meeting of RCN Congress agrees that the RCN will act upon attempts to undermine advanced nursing practice.



Photo: Carmel O'Boyle, chair of RCN Council proposing the item.

The resolution was seconded by Adele Parsons, vice chair of the forum.

Adele urged nurses to join the ANP Forum and outlined plans to create a portfolio of evidence showcasing the positive impact of advanced level nursing across the UK.



Photo: Adele, ANP Forum member seconding the agenda item

Adele said:

“Recent media coverage has led many within advanced practice to feel they must speak out in defence of a role that has been established and embedded in healthcare for more than four decades. Remaining silent in the current climate no longer feels neutral and we ask that the RCN respond to defend advanced level nursing practice.

Our profession has worked hard at local and national levels to develop advanced practice work that is recognised in NHS workforce plans, and has involved significant investment in education, governance and capability. Health professional debate is important, however, sustained and poorly contextualised narratives can have a real impact on people delivering care and public confidence.

Headlines create noise. This is a concern that cannot be dismissed. The conversation should not be about creating adversaries. We recognise the pressures experienced by our medical colleagues – these are difficult conversations that require maturity, respect and honesty.

Where others seek blame, we seek learning. Where others focus on poor examples – we respond with the values that exemplify advanced nursing practice; quality, leadership, safety and patient-centred care.

We recognise the complexity facing the NMC as they work towards regulation and call on the RCN to both support and bring scrutiny to the regulation of advanced nursing practice to ensure it is fit for purpose, so that colleagues and the public can continue to be reassured.”

Jenny Riley also spoke in the debate and talked about the significant commitment required to develop as ANP not only clinically and academically but also personally.

Jenny continued by describing the emotional impact on NPs; describing feeling professionally vulnerable as roles are debated in public and policy spaces with constant justification of the role. She described the potential moral distress, fatigue and loss of confidence in this valuable workforce. She ended by calling on the RCN to support this resolution through championing and advocating for our advanced nurses ensuring that we reinforce professional legitimacy and ensure public confidence through demonstrating the impact and efficacy of the role.



Photo: Jenny, ANP Forum member speaking to the debate on advanced practice

Quality of clinical placements

Matter for discussion submitted by the Students Committee

That this meeting of RCN Congress discusses ways in which the quality of clinical placements can be ensured and consistent across all 4 countries.

Katie Brown highlighted the importance of expanding primary and community care placements in line with the NHS 10-Year Plan and the wider shift towards community-based healthcare delivery. Discussion focused on the current barriers limiting access to general practice placements and the continued over-reliance on secondary care and acute settings for student learning experiences. It was recognised that, in order to develop a sustainable future workforce, students must be exposed to the breadth of opportunities, skills, and career pathways available within primary and community care settings. Expanding high-quality placement experiences beyond acute care was identified as essential to supporting workforce transformation and addressing future population health needs.



Photo: Katie, ANP Forum committee member talking to the debate on student placements

Misinformation in health care

Matter for discussion submitted by the Women's Health Forum

That this meeting of RCN Congress discusses misinformation in health care and the impact this has on the nursing workforce.

Adele Parsons spoke about the impact this can have on people going through cancer treatment.

Education Learning and Development Programme Events

Education & Workshops: The four-day program featured dynamic learning sessions, clinical and practice development workshops, and an extensive industry exhibition.

Forum members attended the following events:

- From idea to impact: developing an RCN disabled and neurodivergent members' network
- Imposter syndrome in nursing: recognising, reflecting, and reframing
- Valued through fair pay - update on job evaluations, nursing profiles, and the band 5 review.
- Cancer you can't miss: clinical pitfalls, red flags and early recognition

- Abortion care: myths and misconceptions
- Ethics and the use of AI: the impact on the nursing profession
- Moral distress and compassion fatigue (reconnecting with the joy in nursing)
- Workplace Incivility
- Early detection: the key to reversing the liver disease tsunami and rising liver cancer death rates
- Embedding genomics into healthcare: what are nursing and midwifery leaders and managers' responsibilities.
- Has nursing lost its way in the pursuit of advanced status?
- From inquiry to resolution - the role of the nurse as expert witness and case manager.
- Promoting mental health and wellbeing in the nursing workforce.

Forum members also delivered & participated in some education events

Educational events, like debating agenda, are submitted by forums, committees, branches and other professional groups of the RCN. The RCN Agenda Committee review these submissions to form the programme for Congress. These member-led events form the main of the educational events with the RCN also putting on relevant events. This year we had two items accepted, co-hosted one event and sat on a panel for another education event.

1) Has nursing lost its way in the pursuit of advanced status?

Jenny Riley represented the forum on the panel for this event organised by the Oxford branch in collaboration with Nurses in Management and Leadership Forum, Fundamentals of Nursing Care UK, RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence, and Oxford Brookes University.

Jenny spoke about how advanced nursing practice epitomises the core values of nursing.



Photo: The panel members, including Jenny, ANP Forum member (second from left) for advanced practice educational event

Feedback from forum members who attended Congress



Photo: Joanna, ANP Forum member, with Nicola Ranger, RCN General Secretary & Chief Executive

Joanna Das

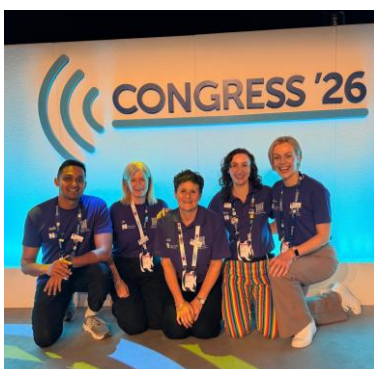
Attending RCN Congress 2026 as a first-timer was an inspiring and memorable experience. It was incredible to be in a space where nurses come together to connect, debate, vote, learn, and advocate for our profession.

It was also a real privilege to represent advanced practice as a voting member on the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) Forum Committee for Advanced Nurse Practitioners. In such dynamic and challenging times for advocacy, I was proud to stand alongside colleagues who spoke with professionalism, passion, and a strong voice for advanced practice.

What I will value most, however, are the moments shared with the committee members themselves — inspiring individuals whose professionalism, dedication, knowledge, and support left a lasting impression on me. I'm proud to call them my team.



Photo: Mithun and Joanna, ANP Forum members with Nicola Ranger, RCN General Secretary & Chief Executive in the debating hall



ANP Forum members in the debating hall (L-R) Mithun, Jenny, Adele, Katie & Joanna



ANP Forum members in the ACC arena (L-R) Mithun, Adele, Jenny, Joanna & Katie



ANP Forum members all packed and ready for the final day of Congress (L-R) Katie, Jenny, Joanna and Adele

