

The RCN District and Community Nursing Forum Annual Report 2025

Forum Name & Introduction:

The RCN District and Community Nursing Forum continues to champion the visibility, value and voice of community nursing across the UK. Our aim is to ensure that community nursing is recognised and celebrated equally alongside other nursing specialties.

During 2025, our work has been shaped by the strategic priorities set during the January strategy day and by the evolving needs of our members. The forum remains committed to influencing policy, strengthening professional identity, and supporting the development of the community nursing workforce.

Strategic Priorities 2025–2026

1. Continue to raise the profile of community nursing.
We advocate for the essential role of district and community nurses in delivering high-quality care to people at home and in community settings. This includes promoting the expertise of community nurses across national platforms and through engagement with partners.
2. Strengthen engagement and influence across the community nursing workforce.
We continue to broaden our reach across multiple professional spaces, ensuring members have meaningful opportunities to contribute to policy, professional guidance and workforce development.

Membership of the forum:

The current forum steering committee membership includes representatives from across district and community nursing. Our current members on the committee include:

Gail Goddard – forum chair
Carolyn Fleurat
Irene Zeller
Marysia Graffin
Charlene Smith
Marie Rogers

In January 2025 one new steering committee member joined the group – Carolyn Fleurat. One steering group member is due to leave at the end of this year – Sarah Haynes who has completed 8 years as a member of the group. We extend our sincere appreciation to Sarah for her considerable contributions and wish her every success in her future endeavours. We hope to have the opportunity to draw upon her expertise and skills again to support the ongoing work of the forum and expert reference group. We would also like to thank Charlene Smith who has decided to step down due to personal commitments. Her

invaluable insight as an early career nurse has been very helpful and thought provoking. We wish her every success in the future.

This year marks the final term for Gail Godard as forum chair and Marysia Graffin as vice chair. We have successful recruitment into the steering committee following a competitive process, with two new members joining in January 2026. January also marks the start of Carloyn Fleurat at chair of the forum following Gails successful term.

Year	Total Membership	First Choice
2025	7583	5031

As of October 2025, the forum has 7,583 members, an increase from 7,271 in October 2024. Of these, 5,031 members have selected this as their primary forum, showing a positive trend in engagement. We continue to encourage members to designate this forum as their primary choice to strengthen our collective voice and strengthen our representation.

Membership Demographics: Ethnic Representation

We are committed to fostering an inclusive and representative community. As part of our transparency and accountability efforts, we track and report on the diversity within our membership. Currently, 4,179 members identify as White, and 550 members identify as Global Majority. Sharing this data helps us benchmark progress, identify areas for improvement, and ensure that our initiatives continue to reflect our values of equity and inclusion.

Reflections on 2025 (Outputs and outcomes)

Digital Engagement

Facebook

- Membership: 7,700 members
(growth of 500 since the last report)

The group continues to demonstrate high levels of activity, including:

- Discussion of community nursing issues
- Requests for support with placements
- Advice regarding career progression.

A high volume of applications continues; however, many are declined due to applicants not answering the required pre-entry questions.

BlueSky

- BlueSky presence launched in 2025
- 95 followers to date

This platform is expected to grow as a space for professional networking and discussion.

Social Media Platform	Followers	Following
Facebook	7700	N/A
Bluesky	95	114

The forum strategy day in January 2025 identified key objectives for the year. These include:

- Raising the profile of community nursing
- Supporting transition from child to adult services
- Addressing concerns raised by members (e.g., housebound definitions, transport costs)
- Amplifying the voice of Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs)

These objectives have guided our activities and will continue to shape our plans for 2026.

Spotlight on Community Nursing

- The Forum was selected for the inaugural “Forums in Focus: Spotlight on Community Nursing Week” in August 2025.

The week featured a series of daily content items:

- Monday – Meet community nurse Ola: “What being a community nurse means to her” (via Facebook video)
- Tuesday – Montage video of Community Nursing (YouTube)
- Wednesday – RCN Magazine article: “What I do at work: advanced nurse practitioner, district nursing”
- Thursday – Blog by Christine Callender (Head of Community Nursing at the RCN): “Shifting care to the community: The challenges and the solutions”
- Friday – Blog by Gail Goddard (Chair of the Forum): “Championing community nursing – the power of our forum”

- Blog by Nicola Ranger (General Secretary & CEO of RCN): “Community nursing: investing in our future”

The aim was to highlight and raise the profile of community nursing, showing the value of the forum’s members, and advocate for investment, support and recognition of community nursing roles. Community nursing is the cornerstone of UK health care, with around half of all nursing care delivered in community settings. The forum serves as a collective voice for the diverse roles within community nursing across the UK, influencing policy, practice, and education. As health policy increasingly prioritises care closer to home over hospital-based service, the community nursing workforce is pivotal to this transition – and the dedicated week highlighted its essential role in shaping the future of care.

Key messages / themes

- Recognition: The event emphasised the expertise, contribution and sometimes largely invisible work of community and district nurses.
- Investment: It highlighted the need for investment—in workforce development, specialist qualifications (such as the SPQ for district/community nurses), and infrastructure.
- Workforce development & diversity: The forum looked to expand membership, include internationally educated nurses and various roles in community settings to build a more inclusive, resilient workforce.
- Sharing best practice & networking: The forum offers quarterly webinars, resources and supports peer-sharing and professional development.

Impact

The spotlight week generated 100k+ social media impressions, 6.5x increase in views on the forum page, 52,147 video views on social media and 1000+ clicks in community nursing members on survey emails.

What next

- Nurses working in the community may use the resources, blogs and videos released during the week to advocate for their role, raise awareness in their settings, and engage with the forum for support.
- Employers and policymakers may reflect on the highlighted themes (investment, workforce, shifting care) and consider how community nursing teams are supported and valued.
- For members of the forum, this kind of focus week offers an opportunity to engage, share their own stories and broaden the visibility of community nursing.

Webinars

The forum continued to co-run monthly webinars throughout 2025 with NHSE and alongside the GPN forum on relevant pertinent topics.

Our Work

The forum published/updated the Our Work section summarising its strategy and current priorities: ensuring a voice at local and national level, PD and revalidation, leadership, policy influence and best practice sharing.

Outstanding Models of District Nursing report

The forum promoted the release of the Outstanding Models of District Nursing report, calling for investments and recognition of the district nursing workforce.

Blogs

The forum has stated to publish blogs and will continue to work on this in 2026. Gail Goddard (Chair of the forum) published a blog reflecting on the forums work, its role in shaping the future of community nursing, and the challenges ahead. This was also used in the Spotlight week.

RCN congress 2025

Five of the members of the forum steering committee attended Congress this year. The committee agreed that it was important to provide as many forum members as possible with the opportunity to attend Congress as voting members. All members of the steering committee held voting places, along with an SPQ DN student nurse who has since registered, a newly registered community nurse and a community matron as members of the forum.

Voting members attended every voting session and actively participated in numerous debates. Marysia, the Vice Chair, spoke in support of a resolution on lone working in the community. The SPQ DN student nurse also contributed by speaking at Congress about the risks involved in visiting patients within their own home representing the forum.

Throughout Congress, daily updates were shared via the forum's Facebook and Bluesky accounts, providing summaries of each day's events and keeping members informed in real time. The forum was also involved in two learning events. One was with the RCN Social Care Leads about student placements, and the other was with the Public Health Forum on Inclusion Health. The forum continued to engage with the wider membership at Congress by hosting the meet-the-forum sessions at the forum stand and attending the forum networking events. The forum also participated in the "World Café" sessions and maintained a presence at the Forum stand throughout the event.

We were able to align our forum's presence with some of the broad themes arising at Congress. At Congress 2025, key themes included digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) in nursing education and practice, health inequalities and accountability in care delivery:

- Our presence at the forum stand allowed us to engage with colleagues on digital, community nursing and lone-working issues.
- By contributing to debates and through our voting members, we tabled and supported motions aligned with digital innovation, safe working practices, and professional development.
- The daily social-media updates enabled us to capture and reflect emerging key messages from Congress (for example, on data gaps and health inequalities) and feed these back to our membership promptly.
- Forum members used the educational sessions to reflect on their practice and bring learning back to their workplace and peer groups.

Below are selected resolutions and matters for discussion from Congress which aligns with our forum's remit:

1. **Resolution: Future Regulation of Nurses, Midwives & Nursing Associates.**
Congress passed the motion that RCN Council should undertake work on reviewing and shaping the future regulation of nurses, midwives and nursing associates to ensure public protection and workforce safety.
2. **Resolution: Support for Internationally Educated Nurses & Student Financial Hardship.** A resolution carried urging the UK government and associated bodies to review financial support available to student nurses and to remove barriers for internationally educated nurses (IENs) including immigration and benefit restrictions.
3. **Matter for Discussion: Celebrating Nursing as a Positive Career.**
Congress debated the need to raise the profile of nursing — including primary care / general practice nursing — as a positive career choice, particularly emphasising that roles such as practice nursing are often overlooked.
4. **Key Themes: Digital Transformation, AI and Data-Driven Practice.**
Although not always formal resolutions, Congress highlighted major themes around AI in nursing education, digital skills, and addressing data gaps in relation to health inequalities — signalling areas for action and influence.
5. **Ongoing collaboration with the health and safety committee around lone working and violence and aggression in practice.** Supporting in discussions to take forward the resolution on how employers support staff following a violent incident, specifically holding employer to account for their duty of care to their employees. The Committee are particularly keen to get the perspective of community nursing staff and learn from good practice in terms of debriefing, within

the mental health nursing sector. The committee are currently requesting engagement to support the consultation of new guidance

Forum Action Plan: Our Response

Considering these outcomes and our Forum's recent Congress participation, the Steering Committee proposes the following action plan:

Strategic Priority	Planned Action	Timeframe
Regulation & Professional Safety	Align our Forum policy-briefing work to include the regulatory review outcome; liaise with RCN Council via our voting members; prepare a member briefing summarising implications.	Q4 2025
Student & IEN Support	Develop and publish a member-focused briefing / podcast episode on financial support for student nurses and IENs, link with our podcast series on career pathways. Specifically looking at the issues encountered by community nurses	Q1 2026
Raising Forum Profile & Practice Nursing	Partner with the GPN Forum (as already under way) to co-host a webinar on Practice Nursing: career pathways' and publicly promote the role as a positive, progressive option.	Q2 2026
Digital Transformation & Data-Driven Nursing	Build on our Congress presence and digital programme: Partner with the Digital Forum and Future Nurse to ensure that community nursing has adequate representation in this area.	

Further activity:

- Gail Goddard has represented the Forum speaking at the ADNE annual Conference about the work of the forum and at Regional QICN meetings.
- Gail Goddard represented the forum at the Activism Event at RCN HQ in June 2025.
- Gail Goddard represented the forum at the RCN Summit on Antimicrobial Resistance.
- Gail Goddard represented the forum at the NHSE event to create a Vision for Community Nursing.

Plans for 2026: Future Priorities

Looking ahead, the Forum aims to:

- Strengthen representation and engagement across all four nations
- Expand our social media presence and member communications
- Deliver targeted webinars and podcasts to support professional development
- Collaborate with other forums and stakeholders to influence policy and practice
- Continue progress on strategic objectives set in 2025
- Strengthen collaboration with national partners to support community nursing workforce development
- Continue expanding membership reach and engagement
- Improve the Community Nursing voice heard at Congress 2026 as over half of the care delivered across the UK is delivered outside of the hospital setting.
- Submit congress items on sustainability, supporting student placements, the pre-registration nursing curriculum and geonomics.
- Develop additional digital spaces for learning, networking and peer support
- Encourage members to produce blogs for the forum
- Develop resources and publications pertinent to community nursing.
- Host a digital-skills workshop for Forum members (aligned with AI / digital leadership themes)
- The forum's voting members who attended Congress will prepare a short "Congress lessons learned" summary for publication on social media and newsletter
- The forum will plan to survey our membership by end-Q1 2026 to assess awareness of the resolutions and gather views on digital skills, practice nursing careers, and student/IEN support.

7. Conclusion

The RCN District and Community Nursing Forum continue to provide a strong professional voice for community and district nurses across the UK. Growing membership and digital engagement demonstrate sustained interest and support for the forum's work.

Through its strategic priorities, the forum remains focused on elevating the profile of community nursing and influencing national conversations that shape the future of the profession.

Name of Forum Chair and Professional Lead

Gail Goddard Forum Chair

Cathryn Smith Professional Lead

Date Prepared

18/11/2025.