

RCN Forum Annual Report 2024

Forum Name:

Education Forum

Introduction:

The forum is aimed at members who have an interest in or a remit for education, learning and professional development in nursing, including registered nurses, registered midwives, nursing associates, health care support workers, apprentices, and undergraduate students. Our members include those working in clinical practice, education, and training roles within service provider organisations across all health and social care sectors, as well as further and higher education. The forum is involved in influencing and shaping policy. The forum also supports education practice development, research, and innovation, and showcases this work through the annual RCN Education Forum Conference.

Membership of the forum

Membership of the Education Forum continues to demonstrate a steady increase year on year:

November 2021 = 10661, November 2022 = 11018, November 2023 = 11337, November 2024 = 11859

First choice members also demonstrates a gradual increase:

November 2021 = 4631, November 2022 = 4817, November 2023 = 4970, November 2024 = 5127

The Education Forum has 1397 followers on X (formerly known as Twitter), and 1855 Facebook followers (1855 in 2023, 1700 in 2022, 1530 in 2021).

The forum has 5 voting places at Congress which were again successfully filled this year by a combination of Committee and forum members. There is a committee membership of 7, with 3 vacancies at the end of 2023, due to completion of terms of Mrs Sarah Done. The latter was eligible for a second term of office and was successful at interview in October 2023. A number of high-quality applications were received with 6 interviews conducted. Thus, all places are filled on the committee and following the Winter election process, Mr Paul Irvin will take on the role of Deputy Forum Chair from January 2025.

Reflections on 2024: (Outputs and outcomes)

Three core areas were identified for the forum committee to address during 2024, at the strategy day in November 2023:

1. Forum visibility
2. Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity in nursing education
3. Developing and supporting best practice in nursing education

Visibility as a forum

Forum communications during the year have remained focused on social media channels, and in-person engagement at the Forum conference and RCN Congress. However, this year, following feedback from members at the Education Forum Conference, email has been used as a method of communication. This has included updates to the members, a survey around

experiences of nurse education, as well as asking for feedback from members on congress resolutions to inform Congress voting. Forum webpages have been subject to an initial review and information updated. This is an ongoing piece of work three new blogs have been written this year including one from Elise Miller on the RCN Education Conference, with more planned.

Committee members were visible and engaged at both the Forum conference and Congress. At the conference Committee members ran workshops to support new presenters and first-time conference attendees. They also hosted a well-attended meet the committee event at the conference venue, the evening before conference commenced. At Congress in Newport, Committee members were very busy meeting members at the all-forum World Café event, the Forum stand, as well as the Neurodiversity and LGBTQ+ networks and regional events. They also supported a number of debate motions, as well as seconding a matter for resolution Submitted by the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Branch "That this meeting of RCN Congress asks RCN Council to lobby governments to place a statutory duty on all employers to provide contractual, fully funded continuing professional development (CPD) to deliver safe and effective care", which was passed by Congress.

The Forum also submitted an emergency Congress Matter for Resolution calling for "RCN Council to lobby government to ensure we have a nursing educator workforce for the future which will protect and invest in the degree route into nursing". This resolution recognised that the higher education sector is currently in a time of financial difficult and that this is resulting in loss of experienced nurse educators through voluntary severance and compulsory redundancy, as well as lack of career progression. The Forum recognised that this is having an impact both on the wellbeing and development of nurse educators and on students, as well as the development of nursing knowledge and professional progress. This emergency item was accepted by the Agenda Committee but there was not time for the matter to be debated. However, RCN Council heard the importance of the matter and further work has been undertaken in terms of listening events with key stakeholders.

Committee member Ally Middleton co-facilitated a Singing Workshop "Singing for health-Singing in Solidarity." Singing has been used effectively as part of well-being strategies and has benefits in increasing staff morale. The development of vocal skill can literally enable a person to find their voice and enhance their personal confidence and feeling of connectivity. The workshop gave a "taster" of the benefits of singing in a choir and demonstrated the amazing sound that can be achieved by people with no experience, forging a shared community singing in solidarity. Participants learnt a song of solidarity written for the event using words of nurses voicing their experiences. Rachael Major contributed to two learning and wellbeing events with the Leadership and Management Forum "Is this the end of clinical supervision?" and "The RCN Definition of Nursing – why it matters". Paul Irvin also contributed to a learning and wellbeing session with the Leadership and Management Forum "The principles of effective leadership and management – meeting NMC Standard 5". Sarah Done supported by Rachael Major lead a learning and wellbeing event "How well are we representing people with dark skin tones in clinical skills teaching?".

Forum committee members have maintained wider organisational visibility of the forum through their contributions to wider RCN developments during 2024. The forum has also been represented in the RCN Professional Framework workstream. To date this has developed a definition of nursing, a model of the nursing profession and levels of practice <https://www.rcn.org.uk/Professional-Development/Definition-and-Principles-of-Nursing>. This year a workstream has started on the development of career frameworks and a publicly available digital platform so that members and those considering nursing as a career can see the range of options available and how skills can be transferred across nursing roles and specialisms.

The Forum was also involved in interviews for the Associate Director of Education and Head of Education for the RCN Education of Nursing Excellence, as well as the Forum Governance Group and Forum Chairs Committee. Forum steering committee members have also raised the profile of the Forum at the Council of Deans for Health.

Equality, Diversity & Inclusivity in nursing education

The committee have continued take forward matters outlined in a Congress resolution from 2022: “That this meeting of RCN Congress discusses inequalities in the diagnosis and treatment of ethnically diverse people” <https://www.rcn.org.uk/congress/congress-events/inequality>. To date this has resulted in the development and delivery of a workshop at the Forum Conference 2023 “the lived experience of students regarding ethnic diversity in clinical scenarios and skills teaching: responding to concerns – a case study” and a learning and wellbeing event at RCN Congress 2024 “How well are we representing people with dark skin tones in clinical skills teaching?”. The aim of this was to explore current practice, share existing resources and gather feedback in relation to the experiences of others. Feedback gathered from attendees identified inconsistencies in approaches and the need for best practice guidelines and resources. The Forum is working on a survey to identify what evidence-based resources are being used to teach clinical skills in this area. Given the significance of the issues around ethnic health inequalities, diagnosis and treatments, the committee are looking to take this forward as a significant workstream in the coming year.

Rachael Major has been working with the RCN Diabetes Forum who are developing resources to support neurodivergent patients with diabetes. This builds on the work of the Forum and the Peer support network who developed Neurodiversity Guidance for staff and students, which will be updated next year.

Developing and supporting best practice in nursing education

The core activity for the forum committee each year is the organisation and delivery of the Annual RCN Education Forum National Conference & Exhibition. For this year, the focus of the Conference was “Future Insights: Enabling professional practice in health and social care nursing education,” which took place at York Racecourse, 23-24 April 2024. Keynote speakers addressed workforce education across health and social care sectors and included: Professor Nicola Ranger, Chief Nurse, Royal College of Nursing, Sue Tranka, Chief Nursing Officer and Nurse Director, NHS Wales, Helené Donnelly OBE, Head of Safety Culture,

Nuffield Health, Professor Brian Webster-Henderson, Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Cumbria

Final delegate attendance was 449 which was the largest delegates numbers for this conference to date. Topic (42.7%) followed by Networking (25.8%) were the main reasons behind delegate attendance. 92% scored keynote speakers as good or excellent. 88% stated that the conference exceeded or met expectations. 232 abstracts submitted – a 28% increase on 2023.

Feedback from this has informed planning for the 2025 conference “the value of inclusive educational practice that creates a skilled, professional health and social care workforce from Nursing Support Worker to Advanced Practitioners”. Based on this premise, the conference aims to promote innovative teaching practices and evidence-based research. It seeks to instil a commitment to life-long learning, encourage new and effective ways of working, provide strategies to build resilience, all of which positively impact working conditions and patient outcomes. Engagement with this conference is looking promising with another increase in abstract numbers submitted (244).

Sarah Done has been working with the RCN Women’s Health forum in relation to development of pre and post registration ‘abortion talks’ education package.

David Barrett gave a presentation to RCN International Nurses Network.

Following the emergency resolution at Congress discussed earlier, the Forum Chair, Dr Rachael Major has been involved in a series of listening events with the RCN executive team and the Council of Deans for Health around the challenges being experienced by the nurse education workforce. These listening events have included nurse educators in practice and higher education settings, as well as key organisations such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council, NHS England and University Alliance. These events will inform the work of the RCN in the coming year.

The Forum was also involved in giving feedback on the NHS and Skills for Health Nursing and Midwifery Educator Framework.

Plans for 2025:

- Visibility of Forum through Congress activity.
- EDI agenda in nursing education, through a Forum Governance Group (FGG) bid to support developing and signposting to resources to support clinical skills teaching that account for differences in presentation across ethnic groups.
- EDI agenda in nurse education through review of the RCN Neurodiversity guidance, in conjunction with the Peer Support Network
- Developing and supporting best practice in nursing education through the Annual RCN Education Forum National Conference and Exhibition, planned for 31st March-1st April at Strathclyde University, Glasgow

Date Prepared: 30th November 2024

By: Dr Rachael Major (Education Forum Chair).