

RCN Forum Annual Report 2023

Forum Name:

Fertility Nursing Forum

Introduction:

The Fertility Nursing Forum is dedicated to supporting the needs of nurses, midwives, registered nursing associates and health care support workers working in fertility care across the NHS and the independent sector. We aim to provide nursing expertise to the RCN and help shape national policy, taking account of the requirements of all four countries across the UK.

Membership of the forum

Francesca Steyn (Chair), Anne Howard (Deputy Chair), Buki Fatuga, Niki Konsta and Kate Pleace (resigned June 2023) and Pamela Morrison (resigned January 2023).

The Forum would also like to thank Jane Denton FRCN for her continued & valued support. The unexpected resignations of Kate Pleace, Pamela Morrison and Jodie Parry in 2022, for personal reasons, means we had 3 vacancies on the committee for 2023.

The Committee received 3 applications for the 3 vacancies (two of which were eligible - one ineligible due to not being a member of the RCN for three years) for the upcoming forum appointments. Both candidates were successful at interview and will join the committee in January 2024.

Wider membership includes:

Forum members – 843 (September 2023)

Facebook group members – 600 Facebook members

Twitter followers – 925 followers

Supporting the Forum:

Carmel Bagness (Professional Lead for Midwifery & Woman Health) and Vitina Marsala (current project coordinator)

Reflections in 2023:

Forum strategy day:

In January our forum strategy day took place in person at RCN HQ, where the forum established a work plan which included representation at stakeholder meetings, plans for the conference 2023 and agreement to work on the projects outlined below. Further work was agreed and took place for the review and planning of our webinar series for fertility nurse education. In addition, we also agreed to produce blogs on fertility nursing topics and to review current publications that were up for renewal this year. We also discussed RCN congress and were awaiting the outcome on the submission for a debate item on supporting female health concerns in the workplace in collaboration with the Midwifery and Women's Health forums and awaiting the outcome decision on a 'caring for carers' submission as part of the learning and wellbeing programme again in collaboration with the Midwifery and Women's Health forums.

Teleconferences have continued and we have not met in person this year.

Forum projects:

- The forum has been working on guidance on male factor fertility throughout the year and the project has been led by Anne Howard. The project team included members of the RCN committee and professionals throughout the sector with a specialism in male factor fertility,

fertility care and urology and in collaboration with the BFS, British association of urological nursing (BAUN), British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) and Fertility Network UK (FNUK). This guidance went to publication in October 2023 and Anne and Francesca will be presenting this work at Fertility 2024 – the annual fertility conference hosted by the British Fertility Society (BFS), The Association of reproductive clinical scientists (ARCS) and the Society for reproduction and fertility (SRF).

- The forum has also been working on ultrasound guidelines for fertility nurses throughout the year and this project has been led by Francesca Steyn. The project team included those with experience and knowledge in ultrasound across the sector and in collaboration with the Women's Health forum and the British Fertility Society. The project, having taken on board stakeholder feedback requires further work, and this will continue into 2024.
- A Consensus statement looking at the Impact assessment of the Education and Career Progression Framework for Fertility Nursing was also published in April 2023 following on the round table discussions and project work on this throughout 2022 and 2023.
- Our Fertility care and emotional wellbeing publication was reviewed and updated by Buki Fatuga, Anne Howard, Francesca Steyn, the Chair of the British Infertility Counselling Association (BICA) and the CEO of Fertility Network UK (FNUK). This was published in September 2023.
- The forum also reviewed and updated the RCN position statement on Fertility care provision for the UK. This was reviewed by Buki Fatuga and Jane Denton and published in July 2023.
- The Fertility nursing forum educational webinars have continued and this year we have delivered 4 webinars on: Fertility care and premature ovarian insufficiency, Surrogacy and the proposed law reform, Fertility and Nutrition and opening the donor register – information and support for patients, donors and donor conceived people.
- Anne Howard has supported on a publication from the Women's Health forum on TOP and Abortion care guidelines which is due to be published late 2023.
- Several blogs have been produced by the committee including Reflections on Fertility 2023, why join the BFS and RCN, Reflections on ESHRE 2023, Reflections on congress 2023.
- Our forum clinical pages were updated to reflect inclusion and diversity with input from the Committee, Jane Denton and Carmel Bagness and the clinical pages were published in June 2023.
- Our education framework was also updated to include fillable PDF areas for practitioners to use as part of training and development. This was led by Carmel Bagness.

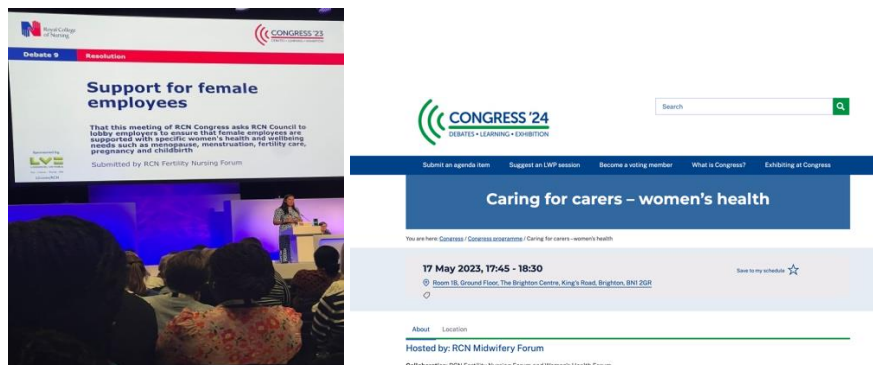


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RCN Congress 2023:

The committee (in collaboration with the Women's Health and Midwifery forums submitted a matter for discussion on workplace health care support for female employees. This was upgraded to a resolution item by the congress agenda committee and 'support for female employees' was presented by Francesca Steyn at Congress in Brighton. The resolution received overwhelming support and work continues with this resolution in collaboration with the forums (outlined above) and the RCN Health, safety, and wellbeing teams.

In addition, Buki Fatuga represented the forum and presented a 'caring for carers' item on the learning and wellbeing programme in collaboration with the Midwifery and Women's Health forums. Buki attended congress as our forum voting member.



Fertility Nursing Conference 2023:

Our annual fertility nursing conference took place in October 2023 and was extremely successful. The theme was 'fertility nursing in 2023' and over 80 delegates attended. Sessions included research into miscarriage and recurrent miscarriage, modern families, AI in fertility care and racial inequalities in fertility care. The conference was supported by exhibitors from IBSA Pharma, Besins and Cooper Surgical.

Representation 2023:

The forum continues to represent the RCN in the following areas:

- Associated fertility societies meeting.
- Editorial board meeting for Human Fertility Journal – RCN are stakeholders.
- HFEA (Human Fertilisation & Embryology Authority) Professional Stakeholders Meetings
- HFEA Consensus Working Group on Responsible Use of Treatment add-ons.
- British Fertility Society
- Senior Infertility Nurses Group
- NICE Guideline fertility treatment and assessment review – RCN are stakeholders – Francesca Steyn is part of the NICE guideline committee as the nurse member for Fertility problems: Assessment and treatment guideline.

Maintaining these relationships, ensures that the RCN are included in policy and process development and are contributing to key areas within the fertility sector.

Representations	Committee member	Other
Associated Fertility Societies HFEA Stakeholder Group Human Fertility Editorial board SING BFS	Fran Steyn Fran Steyn Niki Konsta Niki Konsta Buki Fatuga & Jane Denton	APPG Surrogacy – FS & BF

RCN FNF, BFS (British Fertility Society) and **SING** (Senior Infertility Nurses Group) continue to work together to benefit nurses and healthcare professionals working in fertility services across the UK. Regular meetings take place where each society provides information on the current activities and membership, and we discuss plans to continue collaboration.

Plans for 2024:

Our strategy day for 2024 will take place in January and plans for work for the next year include:

- Submission of a debate item at congress
- Collaboration with the midwifery forum and the Women's Health forum on a project looking at miscarriage care, incorporating the governments pregnancy loss review report.
- Further work to support advance practice within fertility nursing.
- Planning and delivering our annual fertility nursing conference.
- Presentations of forum work at Fertility 2024
- Continuing the work from the resolution item at congress 2023.

Date Prepared and By:

Francesca Steyn, Chair of the RCN Fertility Nursing Forum 14th October 2023