

## RCN General Practice Nurse Forum Annual Report 2025

### Forum Name

General Practice Nurse Forum

### Introduction

The General Practice Nursing Forum represents members working in General Practice at local, regional and national level. We aim to raise the collective voice of General Practice Nurses (GPNs), taking forward the issues and challenges that they are facing as a daily occurrence. GPNs play a crucial role in delivering a high-quality service in primary care, we strive to raise the profile of GPNs to ensure they receive the recognition they deserve, and we support GPNs professional learning and development. Based on membership feedback, our focus over the last year has prioritised workforce development and Fair Pay for GPNs, we have represented the GPN voice across key stakeholders including NHS England and the BMA. Our future work aims to build on our achievements by influencing policy makers and forging partnership working to continue to raise our profile at the highest level.

### Membership of the forum

The GPN Forum remains one of the larger forums at the RCN and we seek to fully represent the four Countries of the United Kingdom.

### Total number of members

The overall trend has been an increase in membership during the past 12 months. We have continued to grow and develop as a forum to 10023 members as of October 2025. This is an increase of 206 from last year.

| <b>Member Category</b> | <b>Number of GPN Forum Members</b> |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Nurse                  | 9602                               |
| Nursing support worker | 293                                |
| Student                | 128                                |

Over 50% of our membership categorise themselves as working in the independent sector.

| <b>Country of origin</b> | <b>Number</b> | <b>Percentage of Membership</b> |
|--------------------------|---------------|---------------------------------|
| England                  | 8673          | 86.5%                           |
| Wales                    | 398           | 4%                              |
| Scotland                 | 686           | 6.8%                            |
| Northern Ireland         | 266           | 2.6%                            |

### **Committee membership**

The committee members represent all areas of general practice nursing including advanced clinical practice, leadership, education and Local Medical Committee. The forum is well placed to advise and support our membership in their professional and clinical roles.

| <b>Name</b>                | <b>Region / Country</b> |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Katy Smyth (KS) Chair      | North West England      |
| Sarah Hall (SH) Vice-Chair | South West England      |
| Joyce Pickering (JP)       | South West England      |
| Penny Sibthorp (PS)        | East England            |
| La Toya De Freitas (LDF)   | West Midlands England   |
| Frances Baverstock (FB)    | North Wales             |
| Sara Baldwin (SB)          | North West England      |

Three vacancies become available for January 2026 onwards, and we received fourteen applications. We have successfully appointed three new committee members, two from England and one from Northern Ireland. As a Forum we are aware that we do not have a forum member representing Scotland but ensure that we link in with members from Scotland to inform our workstreams.

### **Social media**

The RCN General Practice Nursing (GPN) Forum social media groups exists to provide a safe, dedicated space for nursing professionals in general practice to connect, share experiences, and discuss issues relevant to their field. It is designed as a professional community where members can exchange knowledge, support one another, and engage in conversations specific to general practice nursing

**Facebook:** The Facebook group continues to grow, now reaching 7,649 members (up from 7,018 in November 2024). Between 25 September and 25 October 2025, the forum received 211 membership requests. Of these, 80 were approved and 121 declined, with 80 blocked in line with RCN Facebook policy and guidance. Four members of the steering committee act as administrators and moderators, carrying out daily moderation and post approvals. The group serves as a platform to share Forum updates, RCN activities and events, while also encouraging lively debate. In October alone, 289 posts were published, with 5,961 members actively engaging. The most frequent and dynamic discussion themes were vaccinations, pay, and terms and conditions.

**X/Twitter:** Page closed in response to RCN guidance

**Instagram:** A newer account, now with 251 followers (204 Nov 2024)

### **Reflections on 2025 (outputs and outcomes)**



Strategy Day 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025. RCN HQ

The annual forum committee meeting provides a valuable opportunity for all committee members to come together in person. It serves as a dedicated time to reflect on the achievements and challenges of the past year, celebrate successes, and identify lessons learned.

Equally, it is a forward-looking session, focused on shaping the forum's priorities and planning activities for the year ahead.

A key part of this process is ensuring that the voices of forum members are heard. Each year, the committee actively engages with the wider membership, through surveys, discussions, and feedback channels to understand their concerns, aspirations, and professional priorities. This input directly informs the committee's planning, ensuring that the forum's work remains relevant, responsive, and aligned with the needs of general practice nurses.

By combining reflection with strategic planning and member engagement, the annual meeting strengthens the forum's role as a representative body. It ensures that activities not only support professional development and advocacy but also foster a sense of community and shared purpose across the membership.

### **Events and conferences**

#### **Transforming Care for Transgender Patients (January 2025)**

This webinar, delivered in collaboration with multiple RCN forums, highlighted the unique challenges transgender patients face in accessing equitable care. By sharing lived clinical experience, it equipped GPNs with practical insights to improve inclusivity and patient-centred practice. The GPN Forum's involvement reinforced its commitment to advancing equality in healthcare, represented by Sarah Hall. [UKCATs, OUTPatients and RCN Webinar Edit1 on Vimeo](#)

#### **Nursing in Practice Conference, Birmingham (June 2025)**

Sara Baldwin's panel contribution on pay disparities spotlighted the urgent issue of sustainability in general practice nursing. By raising the reality that some nurses cannot afford to remain in the profession, the Forum amplified the case for fair pay and conditions, a critical factor in workforce retention and patient care continuity. [Some nurses 'cannot afford' to work in general practice | Nursing in Practice](#)

#### **C the Signs Webinar (September 2025)**

This event demonstrated how primary care nurses can play a pivotal role in early cancer diagnosis. By promoting vigilance, education, and digital tools, the Forum helped strengthen the capacity of GPNs to detect cancer earlier, ultimately improving patient outcomes and reducing health inequalities. [RCN x C the Signs Forum Webinar 2025 - The Role of Primary Care Nurses in Early Cancer Diagnosis](#)

#### **Navigating Key Issues in General Practice Nursing (March 2025)**

Frances Baverstock, in collaboration with Kelly Andrews, RCN Wales, the Forum extended its reach and support to nurses across regions. This session not only introduced the forum's role but also encouraged nurses to engage in leadership opportunities, apply for Congress places, and shape the future of general practice nursing. It built visibility and empowered GPNs to influence policy and practice.

### **Fair Pay Webinars – 2025**

Across 2025, the RCN hosted three dedicated Fair Pay webinars (11 September, 8 October, and 20 November), each featuring contributions from the GPN Forum committee. These sessions provided a vital platform to address the pressing issue of pay and conditions in general practice nursing.

All webinars were recorded and remain accessible via the [forum webpage](#), ensuring members can revisit the discussions and use them as a resource for ongoing advocacy.

Key themes covered included:

- Results of the latest RCN pay survey, highlighting the realities faced by GPNs.
- An overview of the funding model and its impact on pay structures.
- Updates on the actions being taken by the RCN and GPN Forum on behalf of members.
- Practical advice and skills for negotiating pay.
- Strategies for influencing pay, terms, and conditions at both local and national levels.

These webinars not only informed members but also empowered them with the tools, evidence, and confidence to challenge inequities in pay. By combining data, policy insight, and practical negotiation skills, the sessions strengthened the collective voice of GPNs and reinforced the Forum's role in driving change.

Further details on this ongoing work can be found on the General Practice Nursing Forum webpage. [Fair pay for general practice nursing staff | Royal College of Nursing](#)

## **Fair pay for general practice nursing staff**

How we're advocating for our members across the UK

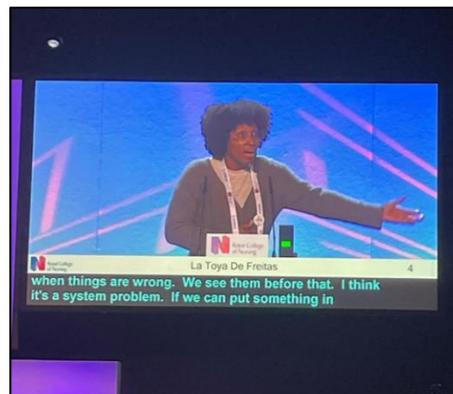
### **Congress 2025**

Congress was a very successful event for the Forum with the chance to get our voices heard and inform our nursing colleagues about the issues that are pertinent to general practice. The GPN Forum attended with 5 voting members and presented at two fringe/learning and wellbeing events:

- **Fringe event 1:** Protecting nurses from suicide (PS) Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 [Protecting nursing from suicide | Congress | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- **Fringe event 2:** Cancer Prevention & Red flags in women's Health (LDF, FB & KS) Wednesday 14<sup>th</sup> May 2025 [Cancer prevention and red flags in women's health | Congress | Royal College of Nursing](#)



In addition, 3 members of the GPN Forum spoke at the podium on topics relevant to GPN's based on the feedback received from our members on the Congress agenda items. This information was gathered using Microsoft Forms.



By actively participating in Congress, the GPN Forum strengthened its influence within the wider nursing community, spotlighted pressing issues such as workforce wellbeing and cancer prevention, and demonstrated how member-led feedback can shape national conversations. This engagement not only raised the profile of general practice nursing but also reinforced the forum's role as a collective voice driving change.

### **RCN Representation and collaborative working:**

#### **RCN Representation and Collaborative Working**

The GPN Forum has played an active role in representing general practice nursing and building collaborative partnerships across the profession. These activities ensure that the voice of GPNs is heard in key national discussions and that their priorities shape policy, education, and practice.

#### **Highlights include:**

- **Academic Association of General Practice Educators (AAGPNE) meetings** – contributing to the development of education standards and ensuring GPN perspectives are embedded in academic discussions. (SH)
- **NAPC Care Steering Group** – influencing national primary care strategy and strengthening the role of GPNs in integrated care models. (SH/KB)

- **Monthly updates with NHS England and NAPC** – delivering regular, structured communication to general practice nurses. Forum members contribute on a rota, ensuring consistent engagement and timely updates across the workforce. (All)
- **Sexual and Reproductive Health Directory update** – shaping a national resource that sets clear expectations for education, scope of practice, and pay, thereby raising standards of safety and quality for patients and employers. (SH)
- **RCN Academy Activism Day (June 2025)** – empowering GPNs to amplify their voices, advocate for change, and highlight their role as activists within the wider nursing community. (KS/LDF)
- **Fair Pay for GP Nursing Staff** – acting as key stakeholders in the campaign for equitable pay, reinforcing the importance of fair terms and conditions to sustain the workforce. (All)
- **Collaboration with the Fertility & Women’s Health Forum** – co-developing a resource for nurses and midwives on preconception and fertility care, due for publication in 2026. This will provide accurate, evidence-based guidance to support patient education and improve outcomes. (KS /PS /LDR).

Through these activities, the GPN Forum is not only representing nurses at national and strategic levels but also actively shaping resources, policies, and campaigns that directly impact patient care, workforce sustainability, and professional development.

#### **Project outputs:**

This year, the GPN Forum Committee has prioritised the development of a new digital resource designed to raise awareness of the importance of early intervention in lower limb care. The resource provides primary care nursing staff with clear, practical guidance to help identify patients at risk and deliver timely, essential care. By supporting nurses to act quickly, it aims to prevent ulceration and protect skin integrity, ultimately improving patient outcomes and reducing the need for more complex interventions.

Following stakeholder feedback, the resource is now in its final stages and due for publication imminently. Once launched, it will serve as a valuable tool to strengthen clinical vigilance, enhance confidence in lower limb management, and promote consistency of care across general practice nursing.

#### **Media/publications:**

[‘Increasing burden’: 69% of GPNs seeing patients following overseas surgery issues | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Practice nursing ‘the forgotten career’, RCN Congress told | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Experienced nurses should be ‘financially encouraged’ to stay in clinical posts | Nursing in Practice](#)

[‘General practice nursing should be recognised as a first destination career’ | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Some nurses ‘cannot afford’ to work in general practice | Nursing in Practice](#)

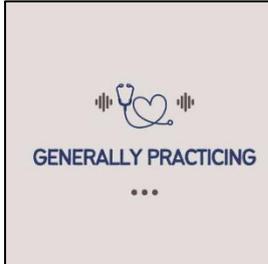
[Poor maternity pay ‘putting off’ nurses from general practice | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Why we need a strong nursing voice in primary care | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Nurses leaving general practice within a year over pay and lack of support | Nursing in Practice](#)

[Jobs for newly registered nurses: where can I start my career?](#)

#### Forum member Podcasts and Blogs:



[When We Stand Together: Discovering the Power of Nursing Activism](#)

[Contracts, Negotiation, and the Hidden Side of Being a GPN](#)

[RCN Congress - How We Can All ...–Generally Practicing – Apple Podcasts](#)

Frances Baverstock and Kim Ball – RCN Professional Lead for Primary Care discussed the key issues facing nurses working in general practice and in the community across the UK. [Nursing in Practice launches new podcast – listen now | Nursing in Practice](#)

Publication of digital blogs from GPN Forum members - [Blog | General Practice Nursing Forum | Royal College of Nursing](#)

Produced and circulated quarterly newsletter for GPN Forum members via the membership centre

#### **Plans for 2025:**

- Strategy day planned for January 2026
- Congress: Planned fringe submissions on genomics and group consultations
- Continued engagement with the RCN & forum members on pay, terms and conditions
- Continue to work collaboratively with stakeholders to advance opportunities for general practice nurses
- Continue to produce a quarterly newsletter using the membership centre to update forum members
- Continue to improve access of information via GPN Forum webpage, which will include the Lower Limb clinical pages and the GPN Journey

**Forum Chair:** Katy Smyth **Vice Chair:** Sarah Hall

**Professional Lead:** Kim Ball

**Date Prepared:** 20/11/25