

RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

‘Protect, Preserve, Share, Cherish’ 2024

Forum purpose (vision):

- To engage RCN members across the UK with the history of nursing
- To support and promote general interest, research, and education in the history of nursing, midwifery, and health visiting.
- To promote and develop the study of the history of nursing through discussion and debate.
- To organise RCN History of Nursing events to promote the work of the forum and to disseminate research, study, and information.
- To develop links with other history of nursing groups within the UK and internationally
- To protect, preserve, share, and cherish nursing’s heritage.
- To ensure the diversity of nursing is embedded in our activities.
- To promote the RCN historic collections through collaboration with the RCN Library and Archive Service

Forum Membership

RCN members can join more than one forum as listed here <https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums>

Join via the website or call RCN Direct on 0345 772 6100 - option 1.

There are currently over 2,349 members of the RCN History of Nursing Forum, across the UK and from all areas of RCN membership including students, retired, full members, specialist nurses, activists, nurse associates and health care practitioners.

About Us

The History of Nursing Forum is open to RCN members who want to learn more about their history and to promote awareness within the profession. We believe the history of nursing is wider than the study of nurse training and practice; it encompasses the experiences of individuals and groups, movements and organisations, religion and war, culture and gender, politics, and social ideas. It can include family history and local history where these touch on nursing.

The Forum regular activities include the co-creation of exhibition and events with other RCN Forums and the Library and Archive Service; creating oral history interviews; writing articles for Wikipedia, the RCN Bulletin, and other resources; supporting history of nursing forum groups in the regions; providing family history guides; and other activities. Members interested in becoming involved should contact the Forum via HONF@rcn.org.uk

The RCN has led many developments in the history of nursing within the UK and at an international level. Our historic collections reflect this, with RCN Library and Archive Service (LAS) holding the largest nursing collection in Europe. Our oldest material dates from the 1600s though most of our printed and archival collections date from the 1870s with the rise of nursing schools. Focusing on English language materials the collections include the most comprehensive collection of nursing books, journals, PhD theses, pamphlets, rare books, grey literature, e-books, and e-journals as well as organisational and personal archives, audio-visual materials oral histories and objects. The collections hold material from across the UK and include

RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

items belonging to iconic nursing leaders such as Florence Nightingale, RCN co-founder Sarah Swift and Trevor Clay.

The History of Nursing Forum reports to the Forums Governance Group (FGG); this positions the work of the forum within the decision making of the RCN and provides an opportunity to highlight the contribution that the history of nursing can make to contemporary nursing research, education, and practice. It promotes collaborative working across the forums.

The RCN Library and Archive Service Joint Head acts as Adviser to the forum which helps bring our members and our historic collections together, providing opportunities for collaborative projects in the network of history societies that flourish across the UK.

The forum works in partnership with external bodies and groups that lead on nursing history including:

- The [UK Association of History of Nursing](#) (UKAHN) a network for nursing historians, a number of whom are not eligible for RCN membership.
- The [European Association of History of Nursing](#) (EAHN), the American Association for the History of Nursing (AAHN), and other international networks for nursing historians who are not eligible for RCN membership.
- The [Florence Nightingale Museum](#) which leads on a number of nursing history projects.

How we support the RCN remit

- Provide history of nursing expertise and input to the RCN
- Ensure dissemination of relevant information to the nursing history community
- Support RCN activities
- Ensure public engagement in History of Nursing

Forum deliverables	Forum success metrics:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hold one Committee planning day per year. • Hold regular Committee MS Teams meetings. • Website – actively contribute blogs. • Provide 6 long online Bulletin articles to RCN Communications team each year including 2 for exhibitions. • Report to RCN Forums Governance Group (FGG) via the forum Chair 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To increase membership numbers by 3% each year and numbers attending events/activities • To identify historical interest/activities across the UK and build local forum activity. • To develop collaborative relationships with Forums interested in specialist history of nursing topics and deliver joint projects. • Deliver projects to agreed deadlines. • To improve member experience of forum activities by building on positive and negative feedback from

RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In collaboration with other forums and RCN LAS co-research and deliver exhibitions in London, Edinburgh and online.• Organise events including members' and public events, both in conjunction with RCN LAS and independently through local member groups. These events are online, physical or hybrid as appropriate. HONF are committed to hybrid events as a way to engage members across the UK.• Engage appropriately with Congress (ensuring a voting representative attends; where appropriate: proposing a resolution / helping at the World Café / co-submitting a fringe event at Congress with another Forum, feedback Congress outcomes to members)• Deliver projects: as agreed by the committee below	<p>evaluations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• To create a pool of volunteers for forum activities outside of the main committee
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Key Projects

- Contribute to exhibition and events planning and prepare bids for 2024-2025 exhibitions.
- Support the Nursing Support Workers exhibition, in HQ from Spring 2024 (opening in Scotland tbc 2024).
- Support Children and Young People Exhibition in London from Nov 2023 (opening in Scotland Spring 2024)
- Support the Unmasked exhibition, in Edinburgh from Nov 2023
- Support the [event](#) series produced with the Library and Archive Service
- Bid for Fringe event at 2024/2025 Congresses if appropriate.
- Encourage interest for the next committee vacancies due in 2024.
- Maintain contact with Oxford Dictionary of National Biography (ODNB) project (due to be published in January 2025) and publicise existing biographies.
- Annual review of '[Tracing Nurses](#)' a guide for family history and local historians (January)
- Restore HONF Oral Histories programme, building a UK online network (Teams) of interviewers, reopening interviews for general life stories of nurses alongside more focussed interviews of RCN Fellows and diversity. Submit bid to FGG for funding to support this.
- Support the Teams network for HONF Wikipedians, encouraging members to learn how to research, write and edit history of nursing entries on Wikipedia; scope delivering a new cohort for autumn 2024 with training session.
- Continue to add to the [Nursing Collection](#) in the British Library Web Archive (review and update listing December 2024)

RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

Forum member roles and responsibilities		
Name	Role	Specific responsibilities
Dianne Yarwood	Chair +	Chair meetings Lead on annual planning, Lead on any Congress bids activity Lead on reports to FGG and attend Forum Chairs Meeting Lead on project bids for FGG Lead on Oral History Project 2024-2025 4Nations & Regions: Lead on initiating/maintaining contact with regional groups. Member Contact Centre (MCC) Emails to Members RCN Bulletin articles lead Nursing Support Workers exhibition tbc
Janet Hargreaves	Member +	<i>Tracing Nurses</i> reviewer Oral history interviewer Blogs
Nicola Ring	Member +	CYP exhibition lead Blogs lead HoN Public engagement event in NLS Edinburgh June 2024 (awaiting funding outcome).
Dionne Daniel	Member +	British Library Web Archive Nursing Collection lead Oral history interviewer Twitter lead Prison Nursing Exhibition lead
Vari Drennan	Member +	Nurses in Red Wikipedia lead UKAHN / EAHN lead Facebook lead Tracing Nurses reviewer
Vacancy	Member +	
Vacancy	Member +	
Teresa Doherty	Staff	Joint Head Library and Archive Service, RCN Professional Lead for History of Nursing

Country/Regional Leads (Attendees when appropriate at Committee Meetings, but not committee members)

Alison O Donnell	Forum member and Volunteer	HoNF RCN Scotland lead RCN Archives Volunteer Link with Queens Nursing Institute Scotland (QNIS) Oral History project volunteer RCN Foundation Monica Baly Award selection panel member
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RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

Glynis Meredith-Windle		Chair HoNF RCN London & Southeast Region contact.
Margaret Graham	Forum member and Volunteer	Northern Ireland History of Nursing Network Lead WW2 Nurses from the island of Ireland project contact
Claire Chatterton	Forum member and Volunteer	Northwest Lead
Stuart Wildman	Forum member and Volunteer	Oxford Dictionary of National Biography Project (2025 publication date tbc)

Forum operating guidelines:

Teams Meetings	To hold regularly (review at the Planning Meeting): 1.5 hours meeting; start and finish on time; members do not talk over each other; members to keep focused on agenda items; members to rotate minute-taking (agreed at each previous meeting and inform chair if unable for re-allocation); action notes to be circulated within 1 week and to include a request for feedback on how the t/c ran and what could be improved
Progress updates	Between teleconferences to share short progress update with colleagues via email as appropriate
Emails	To have clear subject headings; to include clear actions (e.g., FYI, for action, for review, for decision by x); include clear response times required (by what date) and who will follow up. If an item is urgent or needs a response also use phone or text
Information	To identify solutions to minimise email traffic, including speaking to one another!
Calendar	To refer to the calendar of events provided by the RCN and ensure key dates are updated in personal diaries
Face to face time	Members to seize opportunities to meet face to face e.g., at events and conferences – in particular, the annual strategy day.
Action plans	Each project lead to develop action plan (as per agreed template) for each project, keep updated and shared
Frustrations with other members	All members to raise concerns with Chair who will address as required with RCN Advisor
Honesty	All members to be open and honest with each other and share as early as possible when unable to deliver on agreed actions due to unforeseen circumstances etc. Align tasks to member strengths and provide regular constructive feedback to each other to enhance the working of the forum
Profile	All members to raise profile of forum by responding individually to requests from RCN e.g., surveys
Horizon scanning	All Committee members to bring to the Forum topics of potential future relevance for discussion and prioritisation as required
New members	Existing members to talk through charter with all new members, re-allocate roles and responsibilities as appropriate; find opportunity for face-to-face time including a social element for accelerated integration to the forum

Social Media

Facebook	Members can join the closed Facebook group and post messages https://www.facebook.com/groups/RCNHistoryofNursingForum
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RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

Twitter	Please use and search for #HistNursing and #HistMed @RCNHistory
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Forum review and learning process:

Review of team effectiveness - internal

- Following each meeting and teleconference members to provide the Chair with feedback on what worked well, what could be improved and how, value gained etc.
- Fuller review at each annual strategy meeting, rotation of roles & responsibilities, updating of charter etc.

Review of forum effectiveness - external

- Review and use evaluations from RCN events produced by the RCN Events team or from RCN LAS

Monica Baly Award

The RCN Foundation's Monica Baly Bursary Award is an annual award that gives financial assistance to undertake activities related to nursing history. These include undertaking courses, projects, research, and attending either a nursing history conference or study day to present a paper.

The RCN Foundation is responsible for the award. The History of Nursing Forum provides advisors to sit on the panel which reviews bursary applications and makes a recommendation to the Foundation as to each years' winner.

Please note the Monica Baly Bursary Award is open to UK-registered nurses or UK-based nursing students. The closing date for applications is usually in summer each year; check the website for details.

Monica Baly History of Nursing Grant to fund a research project up to the value of £1,000.

Applications are encouraged to focus on the history of any aspect of nursing and are particularly welcomed in the following areas:

- Gaps in historical research, for example, BAME nurses/midwives, nurses/midwives with disabilities
- Areas of practice where the history is not as well documented, for example: prison nursing, school nursing, mental health and learning disability nursing.

The Monica Baly Grant will be opening again in 2024, dates to be confirmed.

RCN History of Nursing Forum: Committee Charter 2024

About Monica Baly

The Monica Baly Fund was established through a gift from Dr Monica Baly's Will. Monica Baly entered nursing in the 1930s but always had a passion for history. On retirement, she combined these two interests to study the history of nursing. At the age of 70, she completed a PhD in Nursing and Social Change. Dr Baly's ongoing passion was reflected in her role as the first Chair of the RCN History of Nursing Society (our previous name).

Dr Baly established the Monica Baly Fund specifically to remove the stumbling block of lack of funds for registered nurses who might otherwise not be able to undertake history of nursing activities.