

RCN Forum Annual Report 2025

Forum Name:

Older People's Forum

Introduction:

The Older People's Forum supports RCN members working with older people in all care settings and in any speciality. Our members have a broad spectrum of roles in health and social care including acute, community and care home settings. As a forum, we want to ensure that the voice of older people continues to be at the centre of everything we do.

Membership of the forum

The RCN Older People's Nursing Forum has a total membership of 11,448.

The Forum began 2025 under the leadership of Stephanie Craig (Chair) and Jo Roche (Co-Chair). Stephanie continued into the second year of her term as Chair, and Jo was elected unopposed in 2024.

During 2025, the Forum experienced several changes in committee membership. Three of the six committee members resigned over the course of the year in April, September, and October 2025 due to health reasons, career changes, and changes in primary workload.

In Autumn 2025, the Forum advertised two committee vacancies. A total of eight applications were received, and five candidates were shortlisted for interview. Four candidates confirmed attendance and were interviewed in September 2025. Following the interviews, two candidates were appointed, and one candidate was placed on the reserve list.

Subsequently, due to a further resignation, the Forum utilised the reserve list to appoint three new committee members. Discussions are ongoing with RCN Governance regarding the possibility of appointing the remaining interviewed candidate to the most recent vacancy within the Forum.

Reflections on 2025: (Outputs and outcomes)

In 2025, the RCN Older People's Nursing Forum continued to demonstrate leadership and advocacy in advancing the care of older adults across health and social care settings. Guided by its Charter, the Forum delivered a strategic programme of activity designed to support professional development, influence policy, and strengthen the visibility of older people's nursing within the RCN and the wider healthcare system.

The Forum's work throughout 2025 centred on its key aims: promoting excellence in practice, supporting the nursing workforce, and ensuring that the voices and experiences of older people remain at the heart of care delivery.

- Webinars and Professional Learning**

- The Forum has successfully hosted a series of online webinars throughout 2025 on topics identified and recommended by

members, focusing on key aspects of older people's care such as delirium, dementia, palliative care, and falls prevention.

Each session featured a range of expert speakers, representing all four UK countries, to ensure diversity of practice and perspective.

Attendance levels were consistently high, with most events fully booked, and participant evaluations have been overwhelmingly positive, demonstrating the value and impact of these educational opportunities.

- **RCN Congress 2025**

- At RCN Congress 2025, the Forum contributed actively by hosting and co-delivering two learning and engagement sessions. The first focused on **diabetes management in care homes**, developed in collaboration with the RCN Diabetes Forum. The second, delivered jointly with the **RCN Palliative Care Forum**, explored **anticipatory grief, and how healthcare professionals can support individuals**. Both sessions were well attended and generated valuable discussion, reinforcing the Forum's role in promoting collaborative, evidence-based practice.

- **Publications and Communications**

- The Forum continues to strengthen its communication and engagement strategy through regular publications. During 2025, **15 blogs** were released, covering a wide range of topics written by diverse contributors, including Forum members and invited experts. These blogs are published on the Forum's webpage, with several additional pieces currently awaiting publication by the RCN.

- **Resource Development and Updates**

- The Forum has made substantial progress in updating and maintaining its suite of professional resources. In 2025, the **SPACE principles** were fully revised and republished on the Forum's webpage. The **Older People's Sexuality and Relationships resource** was also updated to reflect current evidence and best practice. In addition, **four dementia-related resources** are under review and will be published in 2026. These updates ensure that the Forum continues to provide nurses with high-quality, evidence-based materials relevant to contemporary care.

- **Podcasts**

- Following earlier technical delays, the Forum's **2023 podcast series** is now live and accessible via the RCN Older People's Nursing Forum webpage. These episodes cover a range of themes in gerontological nursing and continue to attract engagement from practitioners and students alike.

RCN Representation

- Stephanie Craig represents the forum on the 2024 congress item regarding controlled drugs in Care Homes. This is an ongoing project led by Marie Curie.

Plans for 2026:

1. Continuation of Webinars and Professional Learning Events

The Forum will continue its highly successful programme of online webinars, responding to member feedback and emerging priorities in older people's care. Sessions will maintain a four-country representation and feature multidisciplinary speakers to promote learning and the sharing of best practice across settings.

2. Ongoing Blog Series and Member Engagement

The Forum will maintain a regular schedule of blogs written by committee members, guest contributors, and Forum members. The blog series will continue to showcase innovation, research, and reflective practice in older people's nursing, encouraging professional dialogue and shared learning.

3. Cross-Forum Collaboration and Resource Development

Collaboration with other RCN forums will be a central focus for 2026. Joint initiatives will aim to develop guidelines, toolkits, and position statements that address key areas such as dementia care, frailty, end-of-life care, and inclusion. These partnerships will strengthen the RCN's collective expertise and ensure consistency in guidance and resource provision for members.

4. Development of Educational Pathways for Older People's Nursing

The Forum will begin scoping and designing educational pathways for nurses working within older people's services across the UK. This work will align with RCN priorities around workforce development and professional growth, aiming to create structured opportunities for skills advancement and career progression in gerontological nursing.

By Stephanie Craig (Forum Chair)

20/10/2025