

RCN Forum Annual Report 2025

Forum Name: Ophthalmic Nursing Forum (ONF)

The RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum (ONF) is a well-established network within the RCN. It consists of ophthalmic nurses who share a commitment to promoting eye health, as well as caring for people with ophthalmic conditions and visual impairment. We are dedicated to advocate for, raise the profile, and enhance the impact of ophthalmic nurses, both in the public and private sector.

Membership of the forum:

Count	Forum (all)
Nov 2025	1669 (increased by 72)
Nov 2024	1597 (increased by 96)
Nov 2023	1501

Count	Forum (1 st choice)
Nov 2025	1197 (Increased by 40)
Nov 2024	1157 (increased by 71)
Nov 2023	1086

Increase in membership attributed to by active promotion of the forum at ophthalmic events, ophthalmic nursing student forums and through Eye News publications and social media.

Committee membership

- Full committee with 7 members
- Current chair appointed to run a second term from January 2026
- Deputy forum chair still to be appointed
- 1 member currently on maternity leave
- The committee meets via teleconference every two months; attendance and engagement has been variable due to competing clinical demands, maternity leave, and sickness. This is being addressed and will be monitored in line with the RCN ONF Committee Charter 2025.

Reflections on 2025 (Outputs and outcomes)

- Successful completed and published the guidance for Advanced Level of Practice for Ophthalmic Nursing the Ophthalmic Nursing in September 2025 (Publication code 012 161) [Advanced Level Practice for Ophthalmic Nursing | Events | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- Successfully completed and published the Eyes Right: Eye care insights for every health professional in March 2025 (Publication code 011 980) [Eyes Right | Publications | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- Reviewed and updated Ophthalmic conditions and treatment pathways -Talking heads series [Ophthalmic conditions and treatment pathways | Royal College of Nursing](#) and [Ophthalmic nursing | Clinical Topics | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- Forum webpages: Refreshed and updated by the ONF committee information [Ophthalmic Nursing Forum | Royal College of Nursing](#)
- Successful FCC project bid for Eyes Right series digital pages on Children and Young People: Learning disability, neurodiverse and mental health needs. Project is ongoing, with cross forum collaboration for diverse expertise.
- Concerns about lack of Eye Health in pre-registration curriculum was addressed by writing to the RCN Associate Director for Education in June 2025 requesting

advocating to the NMC for mandatory inclusion of basic ophthalmic knowledge and skills in the nursing programme.

- Established collaboration with the College of Optometry to promote multidisciplinary working and raising the profile of ophthalmic nursing as a key player within the wider ophthalmic workforce.
- Engagement with the Guide Dogs for the Blind Association. Involved in the review and parliamentary launch of the Eye Care Support Pathway for Children and Young People with a Vision Impairment in England in November 2025.
- Completed the review of the Ophthalmic Nursing Digital Pages <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/Ophthalmicnursing>
- 2 forum members attended RCN Congress 2025.
- Established the RCN Ophthalmic Nursing Forum: Steering Committee Team Charter 2025 to set committee members responsibilities and expectations.
- Engaged in the Royal College of Ophthalmologist OPT evaluation.
- Quarterly Eye News articles by the committee members
- Quarterly blogs for the ONF committee members

Social media: We are active on social media. Communication via X has been suspended following guidance from RCN. Facebook communication has significantly increased.

Facebook	
2025	790
2024	240
Increase by	550

RCN Representations:

The ONF has been actively involved in a range of engagements and activities to influence policy on ophthalmic service delivery and to raise the profile of ophthalmic nursing.

- **UK Ophthalmic Alliance Stakeholder meeting 29th January 2025**

The purpose for attending this meeting was to represent and act as a stakeholder for RCN ONF. This meeting brings together all ophthalmic professions across the UK to discuss new concepts, share ideas and for general networking. It provides a great opportunity to network and raise nursing specific issues and the work of the ONF. There were presentations to showcase and share best practice to improving eye health and access to services through the single point of access (SPoA) pathway. It is vital that the ONF attends, to promote best practice and raise the profile of the ONF. This is a strategic meeting with potential to influence major eye health programmes of work.

- **NOD Age-related Macular Degeneration (AMD) Audit Advisory Group Meeting 7th April 2025**

This was an advisory group meeting to disseminate of audit data, discuss strategies for promoting engagement across all ophthalmic units, variations of date from different software systems, and forward planning for succession planning. The ONF representation is vital to provide insights to the audit process from an RCN and ophthalmic nursing perspective.

- **Virtual launch of the Eye Care Support Pathway (ECSP) for Children and Young People (CYP) with visual impairment in England 15th July 2025**

Soft launch of the ECSP for CYP to raise awareness of the publication for wider dissemination and implementation. The ONF was involved in its development, and it is endorsed by the RCN.

- **Clinical Council for Eye Health Commissioning (CCEHC) 8th October 2025**

As the voice of nursing, RCN needs to be represented at this meeting. The agenda included the announcement of outgoing members and new members. The voting for the chair was done, and Miss Dilani Siriwardena was appointed as the new CCEHC chair. There was GIRFT update, and question and answer discussion. There was an update on an optometry-led NHS Special Schools Eyecare Programme. The RNIB presented on the progress of the Children's Low Vision framework. It was highlighted that the ONF should be involved in these projects, which the presenters agreed with and promised to arrange a meeting with the ONF.

- **All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) 17th November 2025**

ONF representation at the Parliamentary launch of the Eye Care Support Pathway for Children and Young People with Vision Impairment in England 17th November 2025 to advocate for the adoption of the guidance. There were charities, healthcare professional, educators, children and parents. Some of the parents and children shared their lived experience of sight impairment and how the ECSP would help with appropriate and timely support during the patient's journey. The ECSP for CYP provides vital support guidance at every stage of CYP's pathway from the time of having the initial appointment; having a diagnosis confirmed; support after diagnosis; and living well with sight loss. The ONF representation at the APPG is important to influence policy as the voice of nurses and advocacy for people with sight impairment.

ONF representation at the RCN

- Strategy day was held on the 7th January 2025
- Bimonthly ONF committee meetings
- Webinar for the launch of the Advanced Level of Practice for Ophthalmic Nursing the Ophthalmic Nursing publication on 3rd November.
- Engagement in forum chairs networking, collaboration and peer support.
- Strategy day planned for the 13th January 2026.

ONF conference 14th March 2026

- Conference theme is "Shaping the future of ophthalmic nursing through the four pillars of practice".
- Ongoing planning for the annual conference with the events team
- Registration booking is open
- Speakers and exhibitors have been identified and confirmed.

Plans for 2026: Aspirations for future work

- Complete the Eyes Right Digital pages series on children and young people, learning disability, neurodiverse and mental health needs.
- Guidance for recognition of international ophthalmic nursing qualifications
- Evaluate the provision of ophthalmic nursing in UK – names of HEI offering ophthalmic nursing and the qualifications.
- Collaborate with the Royal College of Ophthalmologist on developing the future competency framework or revised OPT programme.
- Develop ophthalmic guidance documents for implementation of the 10-year plan
- Support and promote the implementation of the Eye Care Support Pathways for adults and CYP guidance.

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