

## RCN Forum Annual Report 2025

### Pain and Palliative Care Forum

#### Introduction:

The Pain and Palliative Care Forum is a very active forum that reaches across all levels and areas of nursing practice. The forum aims to provide expert guidance, education, and support for all members relating to pain and palliative care nursing. It also has and continues to develop guidance and tools to support the nursing teams providing care to patients in all healthcare settings.

#### Membership of the forum:

Current forum steering committee membership includes representation from across pain and palliative care nursing. Our current steering committee members include:

- Martin Galligan Forum Chair
- Karin Cannons
- Suzanne Monks
- Sandra Campbell
- Olajumoke Isaiah
- Rachel Desai
- Vacant Post

The forum has had one notable vacancy in 2025 due to a newly appointed member having to step down early into their term. This year marks the final term for Karin Cannons, Suzanne Monks, and Sandra Campbell, who will be stepping away from their formal roles on the steering committee at the end of 2025. The forum has contributed significantly in the first half of the year to prepare for this change in membership and to highlight this opportunity to the wider forum membership. As a result, we have had our most successful recruitment drive since the pandemic. Fourteen members were invited to interview for a position on the steering committee, and following a competitive process, four new members have been appointed and will begin their terms in January 2026. This is a remarkable achievement for the forum, reflecting the outstanding calibre of applications and demonstrating the passion and expertise of nurses working across pain and palliative care settings. We will continue to work with candidates who have not been appointed to the steering committee on this occasion to ensure that their expertise contributes to the forum's work.

Year	Total Membership	First Choice
2025	11763	3224
2024	11693	5112
2023	11270	4964
2022	12068	6000
2021	12341	6000

### **Reflections and achievements in 2025:**

The last year has been another busy time for the forum and I continue to be blown away with the dedication and hard work that the forum steering committee members give to the work of the forum. The highlights from the work of the forum this year include:

#### *Forum Conference*

We began the year with our inaugural forum conference, which brought together experts from across the four nations to showcase the work of pain and palliative care nursing. The event brought together 120 nurses at RCN HQ in London. The day was filled with shared learning and networking. The conference ended with an interactive panel discussion that allowed delegates to meet the forum steering committee and raise the issues that mattered most to them across practice. This was an excellent chance for the steering committee to understand the needs of nurses and how we can influence practice. Plans are underway to host another conference in 2026, building on this momentum and continuing to highlight the excellent work of pain and palliative care nursing.

#### *Congress attendance*

This was another busy congress for the forum steering committee. The forum supported six voting members to attend the congress this year and take part in the debates and resolutions. Voting spaces were awarded to a mix of forum steering committee members and wider forum members, so that they have a chance to use their voice to represent pain and palliative care nursing.

Alongside this, the forum also supported two learning and wellbeing events. The first was led by Sandra Campbell and Suzanne Monks and explored anticipatory grief. The second was led by Sandra Campbell and supported by Karin Cannons, Rachel Desai, and Martin Galligan. It highlighted the work of the learning disabilities pain assessment resource and gave members an early look at the resource before its official launch. The forum continued to engage with the wider membership at congress by hosting meet-the-forum sessions at the forum stand and attending the forum networking event.

#### *Podcasts*

The forum continues to develop a range of educational podcasts that explore topics relating to pain and palliative care nursing. To date, the forum podcasts have been listened to over 900 times via the Soundcloud platform. This year, the forum has released three podcasts:

- “Why normalising grief in healthcare is important” In this podcast, Martin talks with Kate Price, the Lead Nurse for Retention at Guys and St Thomas NHS Foundation Trust. Kate shares her experience of setting up a restorative and reflective space where staff can share their thoughts and feelings about death and dying.
- “Late Effects: Cancer-related pain” In this edition we explore cancer-related pain as a consequence of cancer treatment, commonly referred to as late effects. In this episode, Martin is joined by Felicia Cox, who shares her lived experience of late effects cancer-related pain, as well as Professor Diana Greenfield, a nurse consultant in late effects at Sheffield Teaching Hospital.

- “Digital Legacy” for this podcast we joined forces with the Digital Forum and spoke with Sarah Standley an PhD student in Liverpool as she shared her work on digital legacy.

### *Blogs*

We continue to publish a range of blogs on topics relating to pain and palliative care nursing and the work of forum members. This year, we published blogs around terminal agitation, normalising grief in healthcare and the challenges facing palliative care funding across the UK.

### *Assisted Dying*

Forum steering committee members Martin Galligan and Sandra Campbell have been supporting the wider work of the RCN around assisted dying and ensuring that the voice of pain and palliative care nursing is being heard. They have supported the review and update of the RCN position statement around assisted dying and contributed to the development of the assisted dying webpage, where members can access up-to-date information regarding the various legislations and practical advice on responding to patient questions in practice.

### *Getting it right every time- Fundamentals of Nursing care at the end of life*

Ola Isaiah continues to lead the development of this new digital resource, making excellent progress throughout 2025. Ola has brought together experts from across the four nations to develop a resource that focuses on the fundamentals of palliative and end-of-life care. The resource is now in its final stages of review and will be launched in early 2026.

### *Learning Disabilities Pain Assessment Digital Resource*

Sandra Campbell continues to lead the development of this new digital resource. Sandra has brought together experts from across the four nations with expertise in pain assessment and learning disabilities to develop this vital resource. This year, the resource has undergone a soft launch at the RCN Congress and is currently in the final stages of review before its formal launch.

### *Palliative Care Commissioning Roundtable*

The forum was invited to join a roundtable discussion with the government around the commissioning of palliative care services. Following the discussion at our conference (120 members in attendance) and an online survey (232 responses), we asked members to share their top 3 priorities for palliative and end-of-life care. Sandra Campbell attended this meeting and shared the top 3 priorities for palliative care nursing.

### *UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses*

Martin Galligan has been leading the work of this project and has brought together a project group from across the four nations. The aim of this update will be to align the career framework to the recently published RCN levels of practice documents. It is anticipated that this will be completed in 2026.

### *Marie Curie & RCN Joint Conference*

This year saw a joint conference held with Marie Curie and the RCN, exploring palliative nursing and the implications of introducing assisted dying bills. The forum was able to

participate in the conference, with Ola Isaiah joining a panel discussion on developing the palliative care workforce. This was a great opportunity to have the voice of palliative care nursing at this event.

#### *Congress Resolution Reducing the risk of harm from opioids*

The forum has been invited to support the work around a congress resolution passed in early 2025 focused on reducing harms associated with opioids and supporting the role of nurses in this process. The project group is in the early stages, but the forum is committed to ensuring that all nurses are supported in caring for those using opioids.

#### **RCN Representations:**

- Karin Cannon is our representative with The British Pain Society and continues to attend their council meetings.
- Martin Galligan serves as our representative to the Pain Nurse Network and the European Pain Federation Nursing Education Task Force.
- Olajumoke Isaiah's representation for the national end-of-life care audit.
- We continue to have links with the national palliative care nurse consultant group.

#### **Looking forward to 2026:**

The forum will continue to support pain and palliative care nursing throughout the four nations and are looking forward to welcoming our new steering committee members in January 2026. The full work plan of the forum will be discussed at our strategy day in January 2026; however, we are provisionally planning the following activities in 2026.

- Submit congress resolution around improving access to palliative care services across the four nations.
- Submit congress resolution around improving access to specialist pain services across the four nations.
- Hold the second conference in October 2026
- Launch Fundamentals of Palliative and end of End-of-Life Care digital resource
- Webinar to introduce new forum steering committee members and provide wider members with an opportunity to inform the forum's work.
- Launch the updated UK Career Framework for Pain Nurses
- Work with the library and the history of nursing forum on an exhibition exploring the history of pain and palliative care nursing.
- Continue to develop a range of educational podcasts.

#### **Name of Forum Chair and Professional Lead**

**Martin Galligan Forum Chair**

**Cathryn Smith Professional Lead**

#### **Date Prepared**

**6.11.25**