

RCN Forum Annual Report 2025

Forum Name:

Research Forum

Introduction:

The Research Forum:

- Provides research leadership and expertise to support the RCN's strategic intent to influence the development of practice and policy from an evidence base.
- Supports and meets the needs of the Society's members.
- Provides a network for sharing experiences and learning and development opportunities

Membership of the forum:

The RCN Research Forum currently have

Membership figures:	6039
First choice members:	1555
Facebook members:	542
Bluesky	196

We are still increasing membership and social media members year on year.

The Research Forum has two voting places at Congress.

Professor Bridget Johnston commenced as Chair in January 2023 and was re-elected October 2024 and again November 2025 for another 2-year term. Professor Jane Coad was elected as Vice Chair November 2024 and re-elected for a second term November 2025. Steering group members are Professor Jane Coad FRCN, Dr Gordon Hill, Professor Heather Iles-Smith, Dr Barbara Farquharson, Professor Parveen Ali and Dr Keith Couper. Dr Helen Jones continues to chair the clinical research nurse subgroup. We recognise the RCN has proposed that all subgroups are disbanded.

Reflections on 2025 (Outputs and outcomes)

RCN Representations:

Events

1. The RCN International Nursing Research Conference was held in Exeter in September 2025. This was another successful conference. This is a key output for the Research Forum with a steering committee member chairing the scientific committee, for 2025 this was Professor Jane Coad FRCN. As before we appreciate the support of Sally Faley, Melissa Askam and the RCN events team. We had 344 delegates attending in person and 46 online as well as 67 clinical research nurses (CRNs) attending Day 3 the CRN day. The theme of the conference was ***Nursing Research: Transforming Global Health in a Changing World***. The conference explored the pivotal role of nursing research in addressing pressing health challenges. As global health dynamics evolve due to emerging diseases, climate change, and shifting demographics, this conference highlighted how innovative research can drive equitable, evidence-based care. We had an excellent attendance from nurse researchers at all levels including early career researchers and first time presenters. The early career researchers appreciated the support the conference included for them. The motivational speaker, a first for the conference, was also evaluated well.

2. **Congress** – two voting members attended Congress.
3. **Engagement with members** - The forum actively engages with members through social media. We have continued the podcast series, with currently five conversations hosted on the RCN Research Forum web page, with more planned. Collectively these have been listened to ~500 times. We would appreciate RCN comms help so that the podcasts can be shared on searchable podcast platforms.
<https://www.rcn.org.uk/Get-Involved/Forums/Research-Forum> (podcasts here and on sound cloud).
4. **Contribution to Consultations/Policy development** Members of the Steering Committee have made a significant contribution to national initiatives to develop and strengthen academic nursing clinical career pathways:
 - Dr Barbara Farquharson represents the RCN at the Clinical Academic Roles Implementation Network (CARIN) hosted by the Councils of Deans for Health.
 - Dr Keith Couper represents the RCN on the CNO (England) Strategic Advisory Board – Research; CNO Strategic Plan for Research – Delivery Board.
 - Professor Bridget Johnston represents the RCN on the UK Coordinated Approaches to Research and Care Embedded (CARE) group – tackling the separation of research and care in the NHS.
 - As chair of the RCN Research Nurse Subcommittee, Helen Jones currently sits on the NIHR Research, Recovery, Resilience and Growth (RRG) Advisory Board as the RCN representative. She also attends the NIHR CRN Workforce Oversight Group.
5. We were delighted to reinstate the Winifred Raphael Memorial Lecture. We had a very successful in person event on 20th March 2025 with Professor Dawn Dowding giving the lecture. The Value of Nursing in the Digital Age. The event was highly attended, and the informal feedback was that it was an excellent event. Thank you, in particular, to Denise Alexis for her help supporting the event.
6. The Research Forum members and steering committee have contributed over several years to the now launched RCN research strategy and will continue to support the implementation
7. Professor Johnston FRCN represents the forum at the RCN forum chairs committee meetings including the in person events (most recent 22nd October 2025 in person and 19 November virtual).

Plans for 2026:

What does the forum hope to achieve next year:

1. Winifred Raphael Memorial Lecture in person Cowdray hall 19th March 2026 Professor Anne Whittaker
2. Annual Forum Strategy Day 20st March 2026
3. International Research Conference 2026 to be chaired by Dr Gordon Hill, Glasgow September 2025

4. Nursing repository for research – jointly with RCN institute
5. Newsletter to increase communication with members
6. Increase Forum membership
7. Support the CRN with their bid to become a forum
8. Survey the membership to understand the demographics and their needs

Name of Forum Chair Professor Bridget Johnston FRCN

Name of Professional Lead Dr Helen Elliott (from June 2025)

Date Prepared. Friday 21st November 2025