



Annual Report 2022

Welcome

The forum has evolved from a specialist area of nursing informatics to focusing on the wider application and impacts of digital. Those reading this report, and especially to members new and old, are most welcome.

This is an incredibly exciting time for the forum with a momentum and energy growing across its membership. The growth in membership to the forum is likely attributable to nurses engaging and working more closely with digital solutions like no other time before. Every member is appreciated, and together, the opportunity to advance the work of digital amongst nurses is now!

This annual report details the delivery of strategic objectives by the forum in 2022. If you have any questions or queries, please do not hesitate to contact the committee.

The Forum Committee and Membership

The forum began 2022 with Professor Dawn Dowding and Tim James appointed as Co-Chairs of the committee. During Q2 we welcomed three new committee members: Fiona Mills, Irvin Balagosa and Andrew Garaba. Q4 included Dawn Dowding and Sam Neville being reappointed to the committee for another 3 years.

Membership to the forum has grown to a total of 3,175 and it is expected that this number will continue to grow in 2023 and beyond because of the significance of digital and the impact it has on clinical practice.

Forum Co-Chairperson's	Professor Dawn Dowding & Tim James
Forum Committee	Sam Neville, Claire Buchner, Fiona Mills, Irvin Balagosa, Andrew Garaba
Total number of members	3,175 as of 10 th October 2022
First choice – number of members	2,444 as of 10 th October 2022

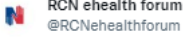
Strategic Delivery

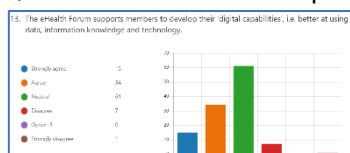
Four strategic objectives were set for 2022 by the committee in January. These objectives and the deliverables are described below.

1. Congress resolution

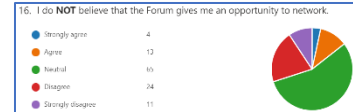
- The forum was successful in passing a resolution at RCN Congress: *“That this meeting of RCN Congress calls on the RCN Council to show support for introducing and embedding clinical digital leadership roles across the health and care sector”*. Congress heard from the voice of nurses across the five nations giving testimony to the opportunity and challenges surrounding digital. The resolution debate was led by Sam Neville describing the need for dedicated leadership because every nurse, across the health and care sectors, is impacted by digital in their clinical practice. Eloquent and passionate nursing voices stated that support is required for nurses utilising digital at every level of the profession.
- The forum committee is actively working with RCN leadership to ensure there are suitable outcomes realised from the agreed resolution. However, it has been disappointing that progress is slow due to the pay campaign having an impact on RCN staff resourcing and availability. Nonetheless, some work is beginning to develop professional standards, which will include the digital competencies for all levels. The committee firmly believes that the RCN must have its own dedicated Chief Nursing Information Officer (CNIO) to ensure the College continues to demonstrate its credibility and leadership in the digital agenda.

2. Forum Member Engagement

- During Q1 the forum launched its online Twitter account. Engagement via social media provides a further opportunity for the voice of nurses to be heard regarding digital. Forum tweets help signpost nurses to information relating to digital, partner events, particular pieces work, as well as using the platform to encourage debate and thinking about specific digital challenges. 
- Engagement via the Facebook site has been limited, with a steady trickle of members joining each month. The interaction between members is limited on this platform, and does not promote meaningful discussion.
- The committee has been given access to emailing the forum membership directly, through the completion of an RCN course and working within the governance of the College.
- Q4 the committee developed and completed running a survey with forum members to provide a baseline for member engagement. The results from the survey can be found [here](#). Only 119 surveys returned. It is encouraging to see that representation of members from across venues of health care is broadly in



place. However, there are two critical indicators that need to be considered by the committee. Firstly, the largest proportion of members indicated that they considered the work by the forum to help nurses develop digital capabilities to be of neutral impact. The second indicator is that the largest proportion of members said they considered the opportunities within the forum to network with others to also be of neutral impact. The committee plans to review these results further at the strategy day in January 2023 and to develop a plan for targeted improvement to member engagement.



3. Cross Forum Engagement

- During RCN Congress the forum took part in a world café event alongside other College forums. Members were informed about the important work of each forum, and how this collectively contributes to the professional work of the College.



- The development of digital skills within the nursing workforce continues to be supported by the forum through useful content and literature provided on the RCN website, which is linked to the forum website: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/eHealth/Digital-skills>

- The digital roles and innovations platform continues to be built up with the addition of more case studies this year. This is a resource to support nurses wanting to build their career in digital, as well as providing a discussion opportunity to engage with the professionalisation of nursing informatics. <https://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/eHealth/Digital-roles-and-innovations>

4. Strategic Partnership Working

- Members submitted their input into the consultation for the development of a standardised framework for nursing documentation across NHS England. This is an important piece of work to ensure standardisation in the profession with relevant documentation across all venues of care. The standard will enable nurses to be more efficient and confident in completing appropriate documentation that is either digitised or on paper. Standardisation will lead to consistency in practice as well as drive up the efficiency of patient care.
- Members of the forum are panel members on the Phillips Ives review, established by the CNIO for England, Natasha Phillips in Q2. The review will identify what is required to ensure nurses and midwives are empowered to practice and lead in a digitally-enabled health and social care system, now and in the future and to ensure nursing and midwifery practice is fully supported by the use of digital technology and data science. The review will publish its findings in May 2023.

- The Forum responded in Q4 to the UK Government's Health and Social Care Committee (HSCC), which is assessing the progress of digitisation across the National Health Service (NHS). Expert evidence was submitted to the HSCC panel utilising the expertise of forum members to specific questions. This was a welcomed opportunity. However, it is disappointing that no nursing representation has been appointed to the panel. Nurses represent the largest workforce in the NHS utilising digital systems. Therefore, the forum challenged this missed opportunity. Speaking out led to being invited to submit evidence to the panel.
- An agreement has been made between the Faculty of Clinical Informatics (FCI), the British Computer Society (BCS) and the RCN eHealth Forum to target an away day in Q1 2023 to review the scope of work and opportunity to support digital nursing in the UK. There is general agreement that it is imperative to be focussed on solving and supporting the challenges that are appropriate to the skillset of each organisation. This agreement is an encouraging sign of partnership working that will support the forum's strategic objectives for 2023 and beyond.

Summary

This year has seen the profile of digitally enabled nursing practice increase. Successes in the forum includes a growth in the forum membership, an injection of new committee members and a successful resolution passed at Congress. This report has detailed the work as per the strategic objectives and demonstrates how the expertise and commitment of the forum is having an impact and providing leadership in the digital ecosystem.

Appreciation is extended to each committee member for volunteering their time, enthusiasm, and commitment to driving the deliverables of 2022.

Written By Tim James

Edited by Professor Dawn Dowding

Reviewed by Sam Neville, Claire Buchner, Fiona Mills, Irvin Balagosa and Andrew Garaba

18th November 2022