



Royal College
of Nursing

Keeping safe under pressure

RCN – here to help and support you - responding to your concerns

- Concerns about patient safety and how best to escalate those concerns
- Concerns about staff safety - your own; your team; your colleagues
- Concerns about accountability and responsibilities - individual , corporate , system wide and regulation
- Concerns about being involved in and responding to safety incidents
- Concerns about your registration if things go wrong

Resources to help support you

Nursing Workforce Standards

- **Responsibility and Accountability**
- **Clinical Leadership and Safety**
- **Health, Safety and Wellbeing**

Standard 3 - 'Up to date business continuity plans must be in place to enable staffing for safe and effective care during critical incidents or events'

RCN Covid 19 Guidance - includes 'FAQs' guidance on workplace assessments; staffing levels; redeployment; advice for students

RCN Resources to support you in dealing with unsustainable service pressure



NURSING WORKFORCE STANDARDS

Supporting a safe and effective
nursing workforce

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/nursing-workforce-standards>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/covid-19>

<https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-help/unsustainable-pressures>

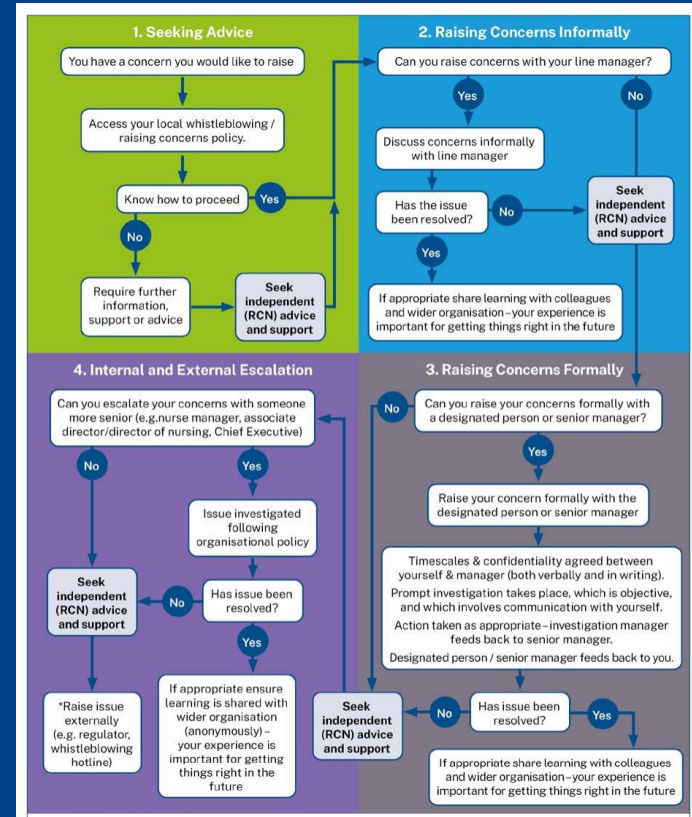
- Midwives, Nurses, and Healthcare support workers affected
- RCN FAQs Covid 19 contains information about pregnancy, both as an employee and as member <https://www.rcn.org.uk/covid-19>
- RCM Covid 19 resources <https://www.rcm.org.uk/coronavirus-hub/>
- RCOG Coronavirus (COVID-19) infection and pregnancy <https://www.rcog.org.uk/en/guidelines-research-services/guidelines/coronavirus-pregnancy/>

RCN Midwifery Forum web pages - <https://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved/forums/midwifery-forum>

Carmel Bagness, Professional Lead Midwifery & Women's Health,
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Reducing risk of harm

- Risk assessment; managing and mitigating risk
 - Clinical expertise of nurses and midwives essential to decision making
- Speaking up; reporting concerns
- Escalation process
- Documentation; incident reporting
- RCN Direct – not only someone to talk to, but builds our national intelligence
 - On-line response within 24 hours
 - Call 0345 772 6100



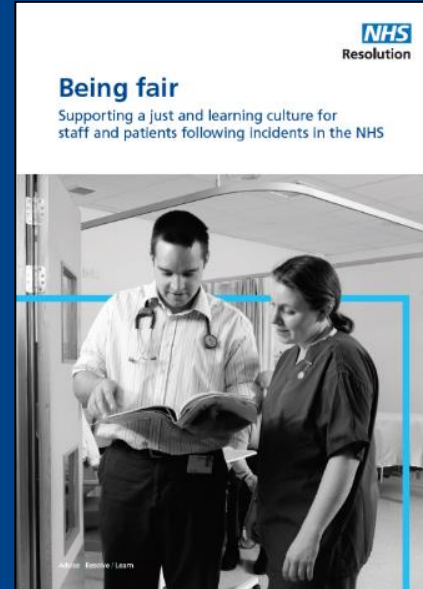
Response to harm - Leaders need to provide a psychologically safe environment and the culture and conditions for staff to work safely and provide safe care

Just and Learning culture - A just culture is not only the right thing to do it is vital if we are going to make care safer – for patients, for families, for staff

Duty of Candour – saying sorry when things go wrong, and support for patients, their families and staff

Fair processes for staff (Being Fair) - build a consistent approach. Help avoid, wherever possible, suspension, exclusion and disciplinary action

The nursing workforce should be treated with dignity, respect, and enabled to raise concerns without fear of detriment, and to have these concerns responded to.
(Standard 12 – Workforce Standards)



January 2022

RCN Webinar: Keeping Safe under pressure

NMC perspective

Geraldine Walters
Director of Professional Practice
Nursing and Midwifery Council



- Professional Risk
- Professional Judgement
- What is the worst that can happen - risk proofing yourself and your decisions
- NMC perspective



What people are telling us they are worrying about -

- Responsibility for others
- Crossing red lines all the time
- Fears around of making the wrong decision
- Accountability - if a decision turns out to be the wrong one
- Consequences and professional risks

What people are telling us they are worrying about -

- Responsibility for others –patients, public, staff
-Caring about that is why you're good at what you do
- Crossing red lines all the time
-People understand that this is not how things are usually done
- Fears around of making the wrong decision
-Often no “right” decision
- Accountability for decisions
-About being a professional - what do you need to do to manage that
- Consequences and professional risks
-What is the worst that could happen?

Difficult decisions and professional judgement

- **Make a decision** – (don't avoid it)
 - National guidance
 - Peer support
- **What is your narrative/rationale, and what are the risks. Can you convince yourself?**
- **Share the responsibility with others**
 - Board/Executives
 - Managers and Supporters
 - Your peers
 - Your staff
- **Allow them to disagree**
 - You might change your mind - OK
 - You might not – explain and support
 - You might be overruled - document
- **Stay close to your staff**
 - Visibility/honesty

Referral to the NMC

NMC has a duty to investigate issues raised with us: no blanket exemption

- Referrals are still relatively rare: no sign of COVID related increase
- 80% of cases are closed early in the process
- We have made a commitment to consider context in relation to all cases
- Staffing management, in a workforce crisis, in a global pandemic – that's context...!
- Highly unlikely that your professional regulation would be at risk
- But: the process can take a long time, particularly in the case of referrals from the public

- If your decisions should be questioned: you will need to call upon
 - Why you did what you did – what was your judgement based on
 - The process of making the decision
 - The support of those you shared it with
 - Your support for those who enacted it

So with really difficult decisions.....

Envisage the Doomsday scenario.....

What's the worst that could happen?

Playback your narrative and rationale – what were the alternative options?

Also: principles are the same:

 wherever you work

 however senior or junior you are

Would anyone else have done any better?

Thank You

....for everything
you do

