



**SAFE STAFFING  
SAVES LIVES**



**FAIR PAY  
FOR NURSING**



**JOIN  
THE RCN**



Royal College  
of Nursing

# The voice of nursing

When you join the RCN, you become part of the UK's largest nursing community. Together, we are a strong and powerful voice for change. You can help make the voice of nursing louder, whether you have a few minutes or a few hours spare.

Across the UK, RCN members are the voice of nursing and together we work to campaign on the issues that matter most to our profession.

We do this by:

- our new approach to organising, which aims to support our members to work collectively around local issues. Using the power of your collective voice to improve professional standards, pay, staffing levels, employment rights and workplace safety
- members coming together in the workplace and through their strength in numbers, campaigning locally to win positive change on issues that threaten your ability to practice safely and effectively. For example, throughout 2023 members in England met with MPs and Ministers across the Conservative, Labour, Green and Liberal Democrat parties to voice what needs to change to protect the future of the profession and patient care

- raising the profile of nursing staff, the nursing profession and our role in health and social care
- pursuing and winning landmark legal cases to improve working conditions for health care staff.

Make your voice heard by:

- speaking to your colleagues and creating a team to tackle the issues you face at work
- contacting decision makers and politicians using our campaign actions
- sharing our campaigns on social media and with your networks
- responding to consultations and ballots.



# Fair pay for nursing

We want fair pay for nursing that improves staffing levels and protects safe patient care. Your pay should recognise the complexity, skill, responsibility and experience you demonstrate every day as nursing support workers, nursing associates, registered nurses and every member of the profession.

It means making sure that our safety critical profession can fill tens of thousands of unfilled nursing jobs. It's about recognising that the salaries of too many nursing professionals have not kept pace with the rising cost of living.

In 2021, thousands of members mobilised across the UK to challenge pay awards from their governments.

In 2022, we balloted our members working in the NHS in all four countries of the UK to take strike action over pay. We achieved a mandate for strike action in each country.

In Scotland, the government opened negotiations quickly resulting in improved pay offers for nursing staff in Scotland, which RCN members voted to accept in March 2023.



In Wales, negotiations also resulted in non-pay award improvements.

In England, historic direct negotiations with government resulted in an improved pay award for NHS staff for 2022/23.

We will continue to use our campaign for fair pay to influence politicians and decision makers, win support among the public and engage even more members to lead action in their workplaces and communities.

We will not stop until nursing is protected, respected and able to deliver the safe care that patients deserve.

# Key milestones 1916-2024

**RCN members are key to any campaign we launch, and we have an impressive track record of success in making change happen for the benefit of the profession.**

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**1916**

RCN incorporated.

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**1919**

Following a successful College of Nursing campaign, the **Nurses' Act** is passed, establishing a register for nurses for the first time.

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**1928**

Royal charter granted by George V.

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**1930**

College of Nursing Education Department established.

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**1962**

The Royal College of Nursing began its **first public pay campaign** in support of higher pay when public sector salaries were frozen because of an economic crisis in 1961.

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**1969**

The **Raise the Roof** pay campaign saw members demonstrating in Whitehall, which gained widespread press coverage. Eventually a 22% pay increase was secured for nurses.

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**1976**

The RCN registers as a trade union.

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**1978**

**Pay not Peanuts** campaign launched.

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**1992**

**Nurse prescribing becomes law** following an RCN campaign.

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**2001**

The RCN launched its *Working Well* Initiative, which campaigned for and championed safer working practices. Key to this was the high profile campaign **Stay Sharp, Be Safe**, which raised awareness of the risks of sharps injuries.

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**2009**

The **Frontline First** campaign highlighted cuts to nursing posts.

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**2012**

**This is Nursing** campaign launched to celebrate the huge contribution that nursing staff make. This campaign included utilising the RCN's social media channels on Twitter, YouTube and Facebook, as well as high profile poster advertisements on London Underground stations and on the sides of buses.

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**2016**

**The Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act** receives royal assent, the first such legislation in the UK.

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Wales secures nurse staffing legislation with statutory establishment methodology in acute adult in patient setting (first in Europe).

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**2017**

**Scrap the Cap** campaign launched. Government lifted 1% on public sector spending.

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**2018**

Scotland launches **Ask for More** campaign.

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**2019**

**Safe Staffing and Effective Care/ Fund Our Future** campaigns.

**The Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Bill passed.** The First bill in the UK to apply to both health and social care services.

**England launches People's People campaign** - highlighting the crisis facing nursing.

**Northern Ireland strike - pay and safe staffing.**

**Health and Care (Staffing) (Scotland) Act becomes law**, the first legislation in the UK to set out requirements for safe staffing across both health and social care services.

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**2020**

**Fair Pay For Nursing** campaign launched.

**COVID-19** - the RCN supports and campaigns throughout the pandemic.

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**2021**

**Fair Pay for Nursing** campaign continues with consultative and indicative ballots conducted on pay awards in England, Scotland and Wales.

**For the Full Team** public campaign about safe staffing levels launched in Wales.

**RCN Nursing Workforce Standards** launched - first standards of their kind in the UK to be written by nursing, for nursing.

**Organising Strategy** is launched to support members to create change at their workplace.

The RCN continues to campaign for staffing for safe and effective care, and influences the **Health and Care Bill** as it moves through Parliament with direct lobbying and member action.

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**2022**

**Historic four country ballot for strike action.**

Strike mandate achieved in England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

Historic strike action begins in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

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**2023**

**Improved offers** achieved in England, Scotland and Wales through negotiations.

RCN members reject England pay award and are balloted to strike. Over 100,000 members vote for strike action.

The RCN launches campaign activity over **GP nursing staff pay** after government fails to fully fund 6% promised pay increase.

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**2024**

Consultations begin on a nursing pay spine - opening up conversations on the value of nursing like the UK has never seen before.

The RCN commits to setting and campaigning for safety critical nurse to patient ratios in every health and social care setting.

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## Jayne McCreadie

Hospital Play Specialist, member since 2012



“I joined the RCN in 2012 and since then, have campaigned to encourage nursing staff, especially nursing support workers, to join the RCN. The first national campaign I got involved with was *Scrap the Cap*.

During *Scrap the Cap*, I began by walking around my hospital with the petition to get nurses and members aware of what the campaign was about.

We had an RCN stand in each of our 3 main hospitals, collecting signatures from staff and the public, and we went to the town centre and talked to the public.

By campaigning with the RCN, you’ll never feel you need to struggle on your own. We are here to support every member with a very loud voice that is full of passion to do what is right for ourselves and our patients.

Nursing staff are vital to the NHS and beyond, and it makes me cross to see us being undervalued – that’s why I got involved in campaigning; it gives us a voice.”

## Vicky Brotherton

Senior Sister, Ophthalmology, member since 1979



“Once you become actively involved in campaigning, you won’t look back, as you will know you have made a difference to your patients and colleagues.

We all have a common goal: to improve patient care and the working lives of our fellow nursing colleagues. We are stronger if we combine our strengths and resources. We do not have any political allegiance to any party, so this allows us to speak to all politicians. I have found that campaigning has improved my confidence in speaking to a range of people outside of the nursing community and in situations I never thought I would feel comfortable in.”



Join us and  
help strengthen  
the voice of  
nursing  
[rcn.org.uk/join](https://rcn.org.uk/join)  
**0345 772 6100**



## Jincy Bilgy

Sister, Emergency Care, member since 2005



“Think 2 Drink was launched to make it easier for staff to access fresh water at convenient, but discrete, hydration stations on every ward and department, and by giving staff a free re-usable water bottle.

Our idea tied in with the RCN’s national *Rest, Refuel, Rehydrate* campaign, and we were able to use RCN leaflets and posters to promote the idea -encouraging people to check the colour of their urine to see if they might be dehydrated.

Local RCN reps also helped to promote the campaign, making it a big success. Reminders about rehydrating have been especially important during the summer heatwave. Overall, I think the campaign helped to reduce staff sickness, reinforcing the idea that the organisation is trying to help staff look after their own health, so they can take better care of their patients.”



**To hear more stories of RCN campaigners, please visit our YouTube playlist.**



Scan me

Visit: [tinyurl.com/campaignwiththercn](https://tinyurl.com/campaignwiththercn)



# Together, we can make change happen

There's never been a better time to get involved in campaigning. Whether you have a few minutes a week or a few hours a month to spare, you can help influence the future of the nursing profession.

Joining the RCN gives you a great opportunity to campaign for the change you need and develop skills that can help you in your professional role.

Whatever your area of expertise and wherever you are working – whether in the NHS, the community, care home or other parts of the independent health and social care setting, research or education and training – you have the opportunity to stand alongside more than half a million nursing and health care colleagues and influence real change.

## Our campaign supporters

You can join our community and stay informed about how to take part in quick and easy actions to support nursing staff campaigning for change.

This could be emailing your MP, sharing news or information on social media, joining online or in person events or signing petitions.

Use your voice to demand change for nursing. Take a look at our video, *Campaigning with the Royal College of Nursing*, to find out what you can do. Visit [rcn.org.uk/campaigns](https://rcn.org.uk/campaigns) to watch the video.

- 1 Become a campaign supporter to stay up to date with easy online action you can take to campaign on nursing issues.
- 2 Attend a branch meeting to meet like-minded nursing staff.
- 3 Become an RCN Representative to support members in your workplace.
- 4 Visit [rcn.org.uk/campaigns](https://rcn.org.uk/campaigns) to learn more about campaigning with us.

Join us and help  
strengthen the  
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