

Review of the year 2024







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Welcome and introduction

Last year was a remarkable 12 months for the nursing profession, our College, and its half a million members. From raising the alarm on corridor care, to representing patients and the nursing profession at the UK COVID Inquiry, RCN members once again proved that they are unwilling to compromise when it comes to the safety of their patients and the standards of care they deliver.

I was delighted and honoured to be appointed as your permanent General Secretary and Chief Executive in July. Since then, I've had the privilege of meeting thousands of members from across the UK and hearing about the brilliant work that you are doing and the very real pressures you continue to face.

When I took the position last year, I knew it was a crucial moment for both revitalisation and progress within nursing. With a new UK government in place, and new health ministers appointed in all parts of the UK, this has certainly proven to be the case, as all four countries published plans for health and social care renewal and reform. Not forgetting the number of challenges confronting our colleagues on the international stage.

2024 was also an important year in the continuing evolution and transformation of the RCN. As a College, we took on board the findings of the independent report into our culture and governance and developed a brand-new Equity, Diversity and

Inclusion (EDI) strategy which launched, following extensive consultation with members, last May. You can learn more about our latest progress on this strategy in the EDI report published at this year's Congress.

We continued to make real progress against our 5-year strategic plan to deliver *A New Dawn for Nursing*. In addition to identifying further strategic ambitions around general elections, RCN Congress, and sustainability, we also made tremendous strides on the 4 defined goals you can read more about on these pages.

We also launched the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence, establishing 5 key academies to lead on and develop our work in activism, leadership, nursing practice, workforce, and international nursing. The Institute is a vital component for positioning the RCN and our members at the forefront of the nursing profession and allows members to set the standards and drive the vision of what outstanding nursing care is, does and needs.

In addition to all the very visible public campaigning, a huge amount of work happens day-in day-out to provide support, advice and representation to our members. In 2024, RCN Direct dealt with over 93,000 member contacts via telephone, web and email, and our national and regional offices picked up over 26,000 referrals – so we continued to show up for our members when they needed us most.

Last year, we won £1.3 million in compensation for RCN members who have faced issues ranging from discrimination to constructive dismissal, and even the withholding of their rightfully earned wages.

Behind each of these impressive numbers is a human story. Members who we supported to develop and protect their careers and livelihoods, and individuals we helped during some of the most challenging periods of their lives. From working with nursing support workers to win rebanding and recognition for the work they do, to consulting members on pay in both the NHS and independent sectors, we've shown that the collective voice of nursing cannot be ignored.

But there is still much work to be done. News of NHS pay across the UK was once again late in 2024, as it is this year. Our members continue to report significant staffing issues and the use of inappropriate care settings. I urge all members to make use of our newly revised *Nursing Workforce Standards*, and our *RCN Employment Standards*, to continue raising concerns on behalf of patients.

Given all that we accomplished together in 2024, I have no doubt in my mind that the nursing profession will continue to rise to the challenges it faces and stop at nothing to demand better.



Professor Nicola Ranger
RCN General Secretary and Chief Executive



The Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is the world's largest nursing union and professional body.

We represent over half a million nursing staff and students in the UK and internationally. Our members are spread over 100 branches in 12 countries and regions, with 2,000 of them acting as workplace representatives.

As a member-led organisation, we work collaboratively with our members to:

- influence governments and other bodies
- improve working conditions
- campaign on issues to raise the profile of the nursing community.

We represent

We represent the professional interests of nursing staff working in the public, private and voluntary sectors.

We support

We support our members with free, confidential advice and information on legal and employment matters, nursing practice issues, career development, immigration, welfare, finances and beyond.

We influence

We lobby governments and other bodies across the UK to develop, influence and implement policy that improves the quality of patient care.

We develop

We are committed to lifelong learning and the development of our members.

We maintain

We strive to be a sustainable, member-led organisation with the capacity to deliver our mission effectively, efficiently and in accordance with our values and core objectives.

The RCN Executive Team*

The General Secretary and Chief Executive runs the organisation with the help of the Executive Team. They get their authority from RCN Council.



**General Secretary
and Chief Executive**

Professor
Nicola Ranger



**Chief
Nursing Officer**

Lynn Woolsey



Chief of Staff

Philip Ball



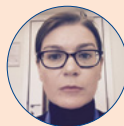
**Chief
Financial Officer**

Gush Uppal



Chief People Officer

Patricia Mbasani



**Executive Director of Legal
and Member Relations**

Jo Galbraith-Marten



**Executive Director
of Governance**

Natalie Zara



**Executive Director
of England**

Patricia Marquis



**Executive Director
of Northern Ireland**

Rita Devlin



**Executive Director
of Scotland**

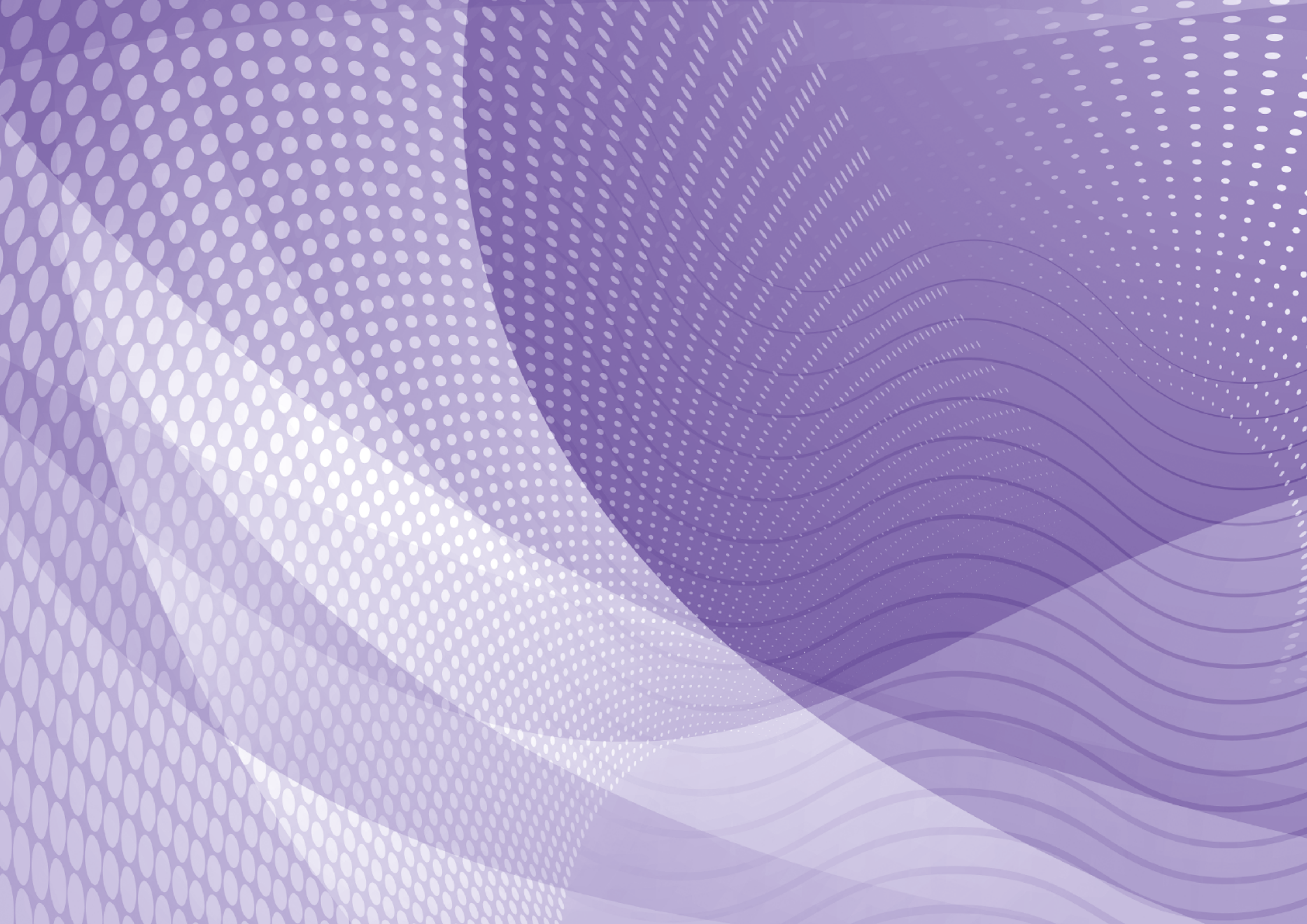
Colin Poolman



**Executive Director
of Wales**

Helen Whyley

*As at 31 December 2024.





Progression of our strategic plan

Strategy update

In 2023, our 5-year strategic plan *A New Dawn for Nursing* was launched at Congress; and throughout 2024, we continued to deliver against those 4 strategic goals.

In addition to the aspirations and activities identified in the strategy (detailed below against their relevant goals), following discussion with Council and our members, further strategic ambitions were identified and added to the strategic plan in 2024. These are:

- our general election priorities (goal 1) – providing the College with an agreed position and set of 12 priorities, which highlight the key influencing areas for this government, following the 2024 general election
- a strategic review of Congress (goal 2) – reviewing our Congress event to ensure it effectively influences the policy and direction of the College
- sustainability (goal 3) – reviewing and addressing the climate impact of the RCN, its estate and ways of working.

A College-wide approach to operational planning was introduced in 2024, to provide transparency on what teams are working on, ensure a consistent approach and consistent language is used, and to enable the College to proactively monitor and support the directorate activities which underpin delivery of the strategic plan.

In July, Professor Nicola Ranger was formally appointed as General Secretary and Chief Executive of the College. Following Nicola's appointment, and in recognising the RCN's strategic plan hitting its mid-point, work began in late 2024 to undertake a review of the College's current priority areas within the plan.

This took into consideration any changes to the political, social, economic and professional landscape, as the plan was initially published in 2023. What will follow in 2025 will be a mid-point refresh, focusing the College's direction on items of key importance to our members, staff and the nursing profession.

Goal 1 – The RCN as the voice of nursing

Fair Pay for Nursing

We continued our commitment to Fair Pay for Nursing in 2024, with members and staff in Northern Ireland returning to picket lines in January and successfully achieving their objectives. Activity continued with indicative balloting on the NHS pay award across the 4 countries, with members in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland rejecting the 2024/25 pay award, and achieving a record turnout in England.

In April, the RCN submitted a comprehensive response to the UK government's consultation on a separate pay spine for nursing. The action undertaken in 2024 regarding pay, involved around 1,500 RCN voting volunteers supporting the balloting process, which indicates a significant shift in the resolve of nursing staff to advocate for themselves, their patients and the NHS.

Having opposed the legislation from the outset, we recorded a campaigning win in August when the UK government confirmed the repeal of the Strikes (Minimum Service Levels) Act 2023.

In November, alongside fellow health unions, we urged the government to engage in direct negotiations to determine NHS staff pay in England. In Wales, we demanded that the government delivers on their pledge to restore NHS pay.

Campaigning and influencing

Alongside this, in March 2024, we hosted an event on staffing ratios and brought together around 100 deputy and associate chief nursing officers and workforce leaders, and established our position on safety-critical ratios, plus a statement of intent

was communicated. A subsequent summit was convened to gather input from the broader nursing community.

Staff across the 4 countries reviewed legislative acts to assess their impact on nurses and inform future campaigning and policy (with Northern Ireland and RCN Scotland closely involved in implementing safe staffing legislation). This work also prompted a Welsh Parliament inquiry, which published a report endorsing many RCN recommendations on implementing the Nurse Staffing Levels (Wales) Act 2016—recognising RCN Wales as experts in this field.

Our staff continued to provide evidence and represented the interests of members during the ongoing COVID-19 inquiry. They highlighted how nursing staff were excluded from the pandemic response and had inadequate provision of personal protective equipment (PPE) and infection prevention and control guidance.

The *RCN UK General Election Manifesto* was launched at Congress 2024, outlining 12 priorities that the College will focus on in its campaigning efforts throughout the next government term. Of these 12 priorities, legislation restricting the right to strike was revoked in October.

In quarter 2, an RCN publications quality assurance panel was established to oversee the development of new publications and the decommissioning of outdated ones, further ensuring that clinical resources remain current and relevant to the profession.

Following increased campaigning on corridor care, an RCN paper - based on testimonies from over 5,000 members was published in January 2025 - highlighting nurses' working conditions and patient experiences was shared with UK media.

Goal 2 – The RCN has an engaged, thriving and diverse membership

In October 2024, we introduced our inaugural employment standards for the independent sector. The 7 standards outline our expectations for employers of nursing staff within the independent health and social care (IHSC) sectors. They also equip our members with the necessary information and resources to advocate for equitable pay, terms and conditions. Concurrently, we also launched campaigns aimed at eradicating the exploitation of migrant social care workers, marking the first significant RCN campaign exclusively focused on IHSC. A data-driven influencing campaign concerning parity with NHS Terms and Conditions of Service commenced in March.

In May 2024, we published *Our Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy* for members. Its primary objective is to ‘ensure that everyone has the freedom, opportunity and space to belong within the College and be represented in our governance structure’. To achieve this, the strategy is centred around 5 key priorities, which will be implanted over the next 5 years.

1. Leaders take accountability for EDI.
2. Ensuring advocacy for all member voices.
3. Facilitating support and collaboration across all communities.
4. Encouraging diversity of representation in governance.
5. Creating an inclusive workplace for all members.

One of the EDI Committee’s initial outputs was launching our new interactive race equity resource, *Taking Time to Talk:*

Advancing Race Equity in Nursing and Midwifery. Developed in collaboration with NHS England, this resource focuses on fostering conversations and actions that promote race equity across all care settings in the UK. The initiative follows the RCN’s inaugural anti-racism summit held in April 2024.

Throughout 2024, listening events and multiple research initiatives, including the RCN *Last Shift Survey*, launched in February and a winter survey involving 5,000 members, were conducted. These aimed to gather data, information and lived experiences on issues such as corridor care, the new nursing pay spine, the impact of the cost-of-living crisis, and equality pay gaps. Using this evidence, we were able to develop influencing materials to advance our goals for the profession, including the implementation of agreed nurse-to-patient ratios across all health settings and the elimination of corridor care.

Further commissioned research on corridor care began in the first quarter of the year, and a roundtable discussion with external stakeholders, including other royal colleges and regulators, was held in quarter 2. In quarter 3, a toolkit was launched to assist RCN staff in supporting internationally educated nurse (IEN) members with various employment-related issues, including guidance on when to refer members to our Immigration Advice Service (IAS).

Data collection began in 2024 to inform and shape the initial understanding and options for the Council-mandated review of Congress, with groups from across the College invited to provide feedback. A report is scheduled to be presented to Council in quarter 2 of 2025.

Goal 3 – The RCN has a sustainable and viable business model

In 2024, our membership grew to more than 570,000 members, its highest count to date. Work continues to recruit and retain members, including rolling out the 2023 student recruitment pilot across the UK to encourage students to join the RCN. This year, for the first time in 10 years, Council signed off on an increase in subscription costs – giving the College further resources to support, campaign, influence and fight for members and the profession.

Contracts were signed with suppliers to design, deliver and implement the RCN's new HR and finance solution, with workshops undertaken to develop blueprints on how these systems will work and be tested. Additional testing has been planned to ensure the systems will be as robust as possible when the first phase plans to launch in the second half of 2025.

Funding has been secured to further develop the RCN sustainability strategy, and develop these into plans for delivery. This will look at our estate's carbon footprint and fuel efficiency, as well as how we can influence and educate the health care profession.

An updated personal development plan approach was successfully implemented for staff in England – with staff survey results showing an improvement in staff morale following the launch. Further learning on how to improve the approach has also been identified, as well as discussions around rolling this out UK wide.

A series of principles were agreed for the information governance strategy. Alongside this, a review of our information lifecycle and update of our Information Asset Register was completed. This will help us to better understand our current data and ways of working.

The transformation of legal services continued to improve structures and processes within the department. This included changes to casework/caseload management and a focus on the expertise required to meet the diverse needs of members.

In May 2024, the RCN's new hybrid model was launched – requiring staff to spend at least 40% of their time per week undertaking in-person activities to achieve a practical blend of remote and in person working that supports individual circumstances with the delivery of strategic objectives.

Following the arrival of the our new chief people officer, work began in the second half of 2024 to articulate and outline the College's people plan for the short, medium and longer term (due in the first half of 2025).

Goal 4 – The RCN’s governance and positive culture underpin the delivery of the strategy

Following the recommendations from the independent reviews into our governance and culture, the terms of reference for Council and the key governance committees were reviewed, restated and agreed. This, along with the updated role descriptors and refreshed scheme of delegation, will improve clarity of responsibility and authority of such bodies and increase member understanding.

The governance and culture programme activities below were completed and signed off by Council in 2024:

- our scheme of delegation covering the whole of the RCN Group
- remits of the principal committees (the Trade Union Committee and Professional Nursing Committee) reviewed and delegations agreed
- equal voting rights for all external advisers
- role descriptors which clarify the purpose and remit for various positions (including chair of council, president, and chair of congress)
- the processes to establish and disestablish forums
- amendments to the standing orders to ensure that officer roles are clearly defined
- the programme of training and development for Council members
- updates to rules for forums, to encourage flexibility and promote diversity of membership
- a mechanism for members to submit items for Council agendas was launched in quarter 1

- updates to the digital method for requesting an EGM were implemented
- Council/standing committee conflicts policy – designed to resolve any disagreements at an early stage and reduce the likelihood of powers delegated by Council to be revoked.

In parallel to introducing the operational planning process outlined above, the newly formed Project Management Office (PMO) also launched a toolkit for staff who are undertaking small projects throughout the College.

The toolkit provides bespoke RCN-specific tools and ways of working based around best practice project management techniques. This aims to help staff maximise their chances of successfully delivering pieces of work in a consistent, repeatable and transparent way.

Business continuity policy and plans for all directorates were also developed and finalised in 2024. This ensures the RCN can continue to operate as soon as practicably possible following any disruption to business processes.

Further information

- *A New Dawn for Nursing: Five-year strategic plan* – rcn.org.uk/5yearstrategy
- *RCN UK General Election Manifesto 2024* – rcn.org.uk/manifesto-2024
- *Ending Corridor Care* – rcn.org.uk/corridor-care
- *RCN Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care Sectors* – rcn.org.uk/employment-standards
- *EDI strategy – Taking time to talk* – rcn.org.uk/timetotalk



Member engagement

Our engaged membership

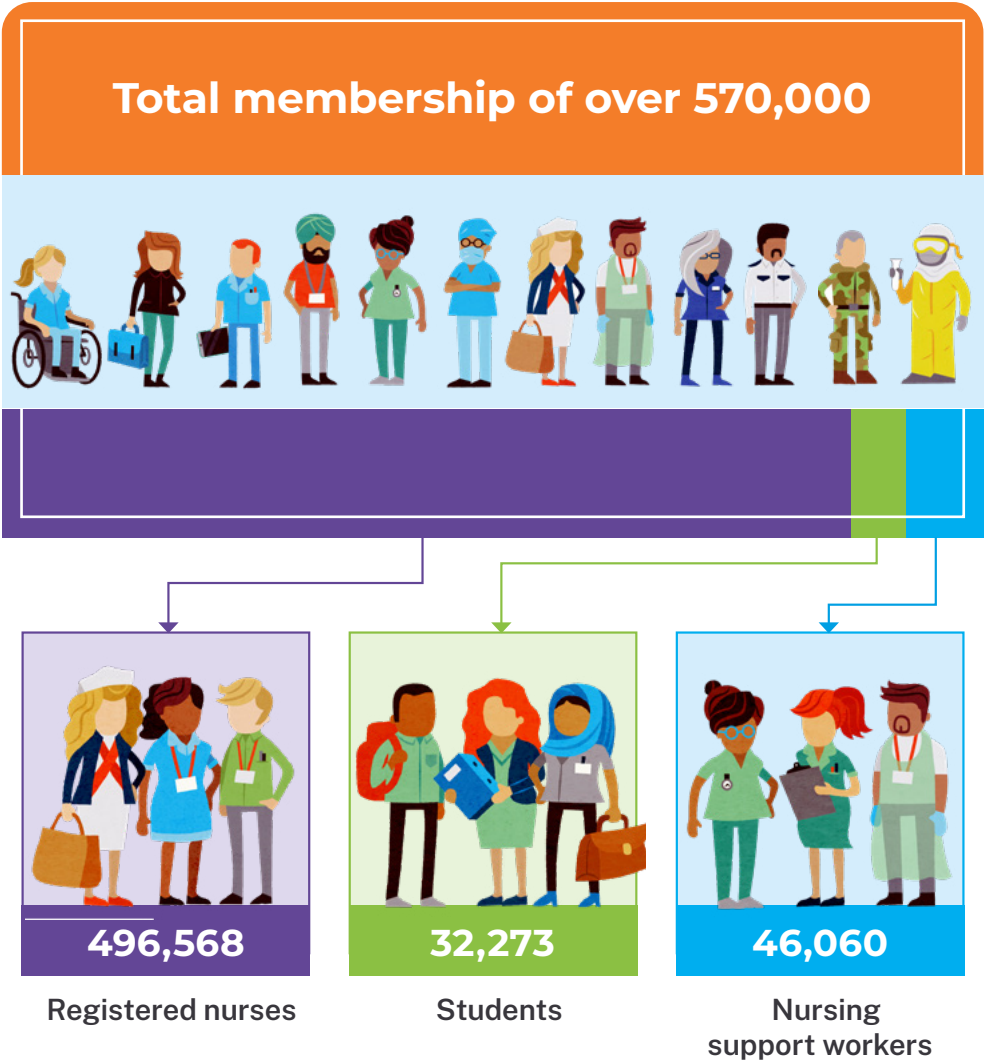
As of 31 December 2024, our membership had increased by 3.3% over the past 12 months, driven by heightened press coverage and public awareness of the College.

Nurse membership grew by 3.2% annually. This spiked in the third quarter of the year, coinciding with key events including the Labour government coming into power, Nicola Ranger’s appointment as General Secretary and Chief Executive, and increased campaigning for the pay award consultation vote.

49% of nurses who joined the RCN in 2024 were internationally educated nurses (IENs). This group now represents 16.6% of our total membership and made up almost 46% of new NMC registrants (as of September 2024). IEN recruitment efforts in 2024 were supported by the multi-channel promotion of various RCN resources, including a series of webinars, an advice guide and member videos.

Our nursing support worker (NSW) membership grew by 11.3% annually. Key activities included the RCN’s NSW Day, featuring an exhibition and conference, paid social and advertising campaigns to raise membership awareness, and a new series of webinars dedicated to the nursing support workforce.

The student market remains a challenge due to the steady decline in nursing students in the UK since 2021. In 2024, we launched a new initiative offering free membership for first-year students. This saw an 21% increase in first-year joiners between August and October 2024, compared to the same period in 2023. Across all student year groups, there was a 12% increase in membership during our student recruitment period (August to October).



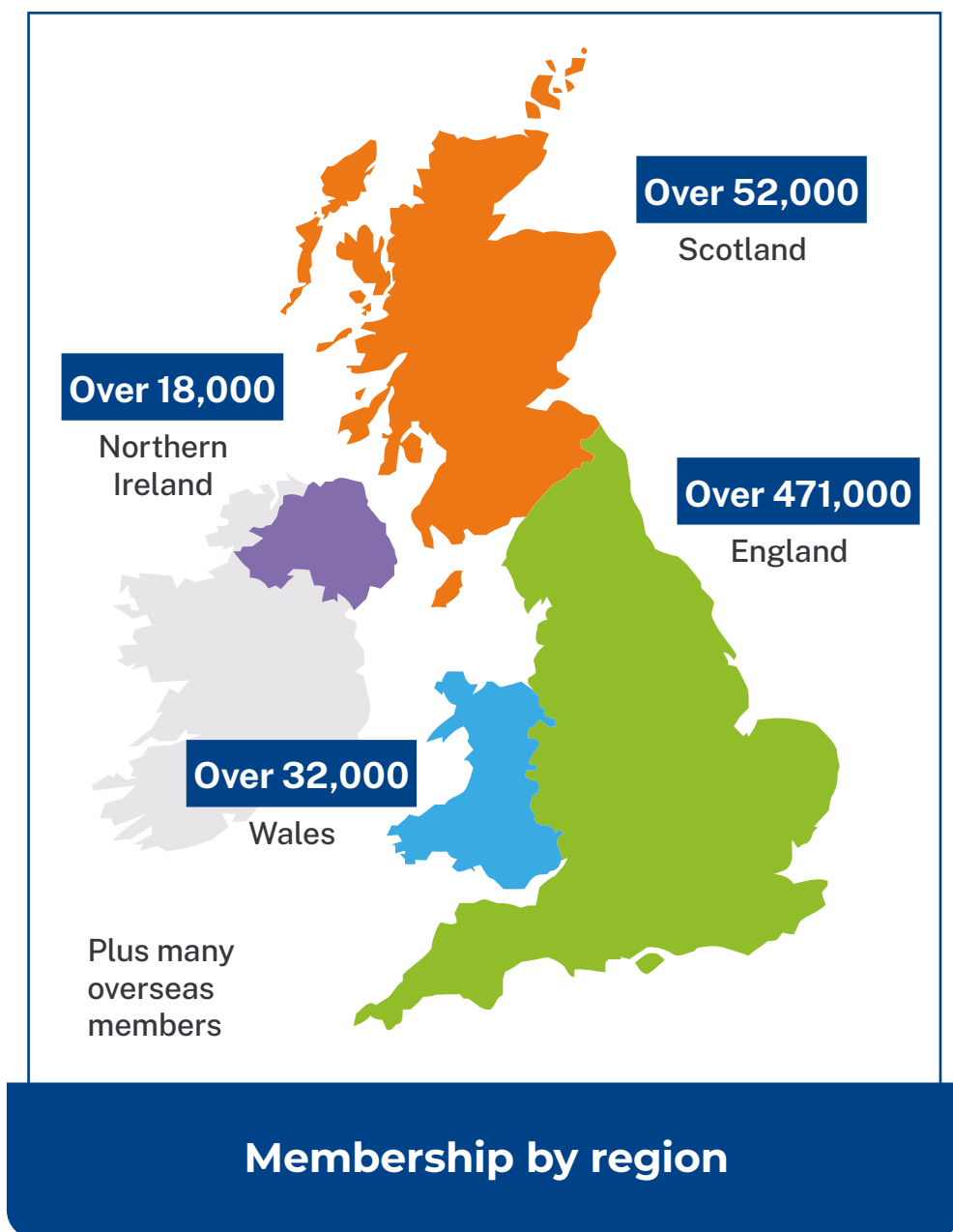
Email engagement

In 2024, we sent more than 1,900 email campaigns, marking a 26% increase compared to 2023, reflecting the increasing growth of the RCN membership.

When it comes to engagement, the number of members opening more than 100 email campaigns has grown by 66% this year (compared to 60,353 members in 2023), indicating a highly engaged audience.

Additionally, there was an increase in the number of members opening more than 10 emails per year, showing a strong level of regular engagement. Despite sending more emails, the data suggests that members are engaging with content that is timely and relevant.

From 1 January to 31 December 2024, the average open rate was 45%. Our top-performing emails this year were primarily event reminders sent to smaller groups of members. The highest-performing large email send was a 'confirm your details' email, which achieved a 40% click-to-open rate. Another highlight was a 'consultation' email sent to non-voters, which achieved a 34% click-to-open rate.



UK professional forums

Throughout 2024, membership of the professional forums has continued to grow, and we also saw a record number of members applying to be part of the Forum Steering Committee.

Forum members have continued to promote best practice through the review and development of clinical guidance and standards, representing the RCN at key stakeholder events and contributing to clinical consultations; as well as delivering on education, learning resources and events.

Forum membership

34

Forums

200,887

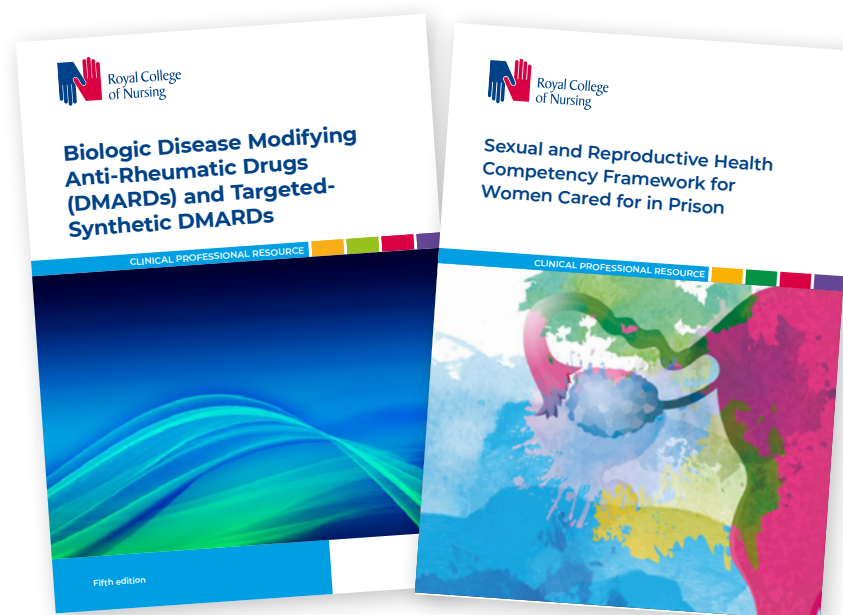
Members

Forum publications

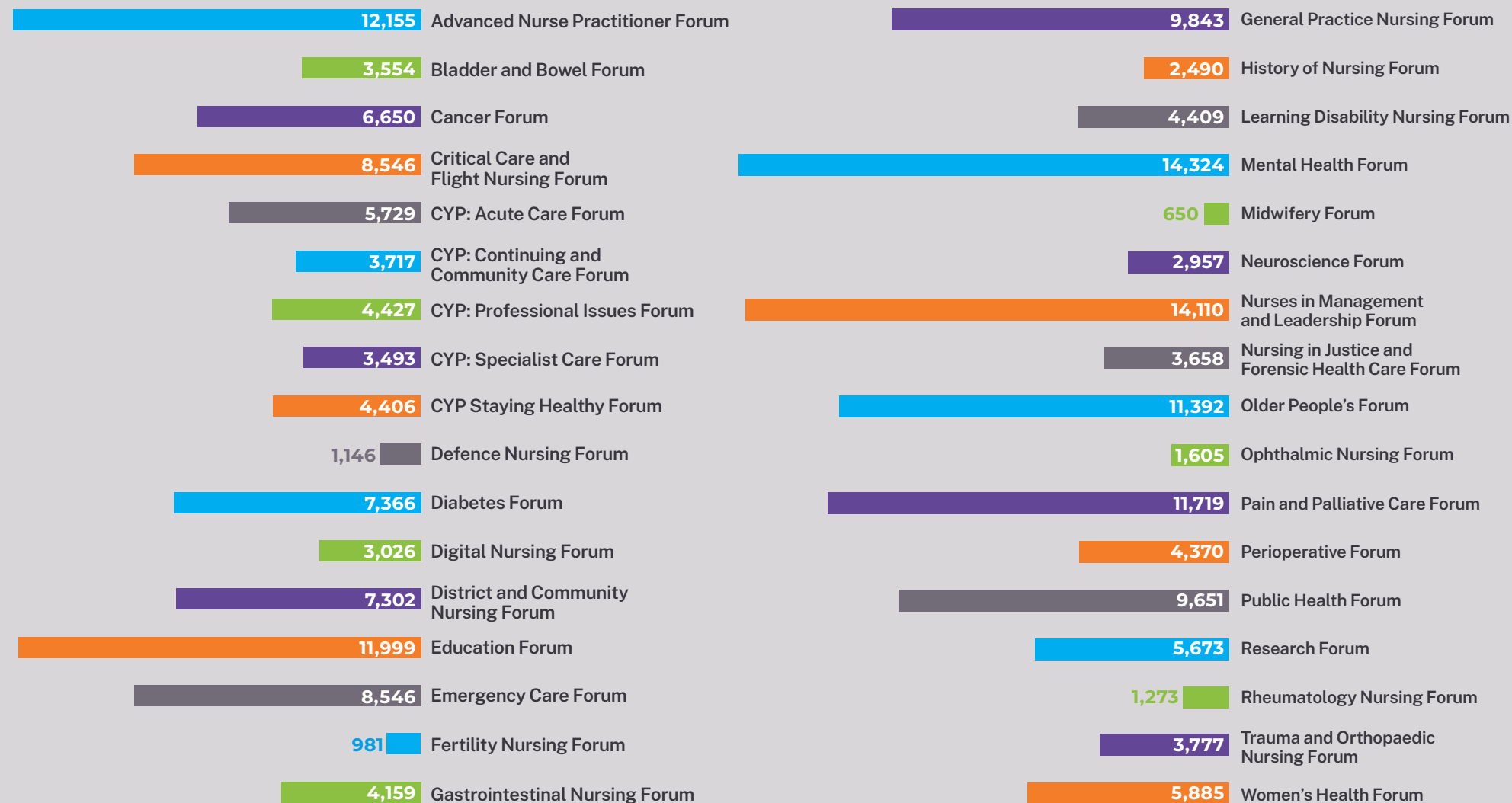
Forums and RCN professional leads have continued to collaborate to ensure all RCN publications remain relevant, contemporary and meet quality assurance standards.

This included the Rheumatology Forum reviewing the *Biologic disease modifying anti-rheumatic drugs and targeted-synthetic* publication and the Women's Health Forum reviewing the *Equality, diversity and inclusion in women's health* publication.

A number of new digital publications were also produced; including the multi-forum development of *Sexual and reproductive health competency framework for women cared for in prison*, which saw the collaboration of the public health, midwifery, women's health and the nursing in justice and forensic forums.



Membership of RCN forums in 2024



Forum events

During 2024, forum members organised and delivered a number of events, including collaborating with the Library and Museum Team on 2 exhibitions. Spring 2024 saw the opening of *Once upon a time: a history of nursing children and young people*. While the autumn exhibition, *Shining a light: a history of nursing support work*, highlighted the rich and diverse past of nursing support workers.

The Learning Disability Nurse Forum Workforce Summit attracted more than 100 stakeholders from across the UK, to highlight the crisis in learning disability nursing and gain a commitment on a call for action.

Forums also ran webinars across a range of clinical areas of practice to support members with improving standards of care, enhance awareness and further professional development.

Education Forum conference

This event was held in York in April 2024, attracting 450 nurse educators from across the UK. Centred around the theme: 'Future Insights: Enabling professional practice in health and social care nursing education', the conference provided a valuable platform for delegates to discuss, debate and celebrate the latest nursing developments and innovations in nurse education, while also fostering networking opportunities.

The call for abstracts received over 230 submissions, marking a 23% increase from 2023. Of these, approximately 100 of the highest scoring abstracts were selected for presentation. Additionally, the conference successfully met its income target for sponsorship and exhibition revenue, which supports the ongoing work of the RCN.

International Nursing Research Conference

This event was held in September in Newcastle, centred around the theme: 'Inclusivity in nurse research: Working together to make a difference'. It received sponsorship from Northumbria Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, Northumbria University, and The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust.

Abstract submissions increased by 21% compared to the previous year, and attendance exceeded 400 delegates. Feedback from attendees highlighted the value of networking opportunities, with many expressing their appreciation for the chance to connect and collaborate.

In addition, conferences were also delivered by the Women's Health Forum, Ophthalmic Nursing Forum and the Nurses in Management and Leadership Forum.

Forum influencing

Influencing activity has been an essential part of the professional work by forum members. It ensures the nursing voice is represented in the developments and changes that affect the nursing profession and allows forums to influence nursing policy and practice standards within their specialist areas.

For example, the Ophthalmic Nurses Forum sit on the National Optometrist Workforce Advisory Group, to ensure the role of nurses is recognised. While the Cancer Care Forum's representation on the NHS England national cancer strategy has ensured the voice of nursing is part of the national discussion, and that the nursing role is recognised in these developments.

Members of the Pain and Palliative Care Forum have provided representation and contributed to the update of the position statement and guidance around assisted dying, as debates to legislate the bill progresses.

This influencing work has improved the profile of the forums and the RCN, both locally and nationally. The intelligence gained from these events has helped to influence the ongoing work of the forums and raise the profile of nurses working in specialist areas such as justice and forensic nursing – which has seen a notable rise in colleagues reaching out for both information and networking opportunities.

Key forum developments

Significant progress was made with the implementation of the Forums and Networks Review, in 2024, as part of an ongoing commitment to enhance and support the functioning of the forum steering committees.

Several changes were made to the governance rules and processes, and by removing some of the RCN constitutional barriers, this enabled greater flexibility when recruiting committee members. This has also reduced the burden of responsibility on the chair, which in turn, makes the role more attractive.

A leadership support programme was finalised and delivered in person for forum chairs, and a pre-recorded programme has been made available for all forum steering committee members via their RCN login. The chairs' feedback has been very positive and we will look to see how some of the themes might be incorporated into the chairs' induction for 2025.

A separate report on the achievements of the Forums and Networks Review will be made available in due course.

Active members making changes

The RCN offers a wide range of activist roles for members to engage in, supporting both the professional and trade union agendas of our organisation. In 2024, we launched the Activism Academy as part of the new RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence, to help the entire organisation advance this important work.

A community of trained and active RCN reps across the UK is central to winning positive change for nursing. Throughout 2024, reps have been working tirelessly to protect members' terms and conditions, advocating for their learning, health and safety needs, and amplifying the profession's voice to demand action on issues ranging from car parking to corridor care.

Reps pathway

The RCN reps pathway provides a thorough grounding for new reps in their roles, providing opportunities to network and plan how they will engage members in actions that drive positive change. We adopt a blended approach, delivering learning both in person and online to ensure new reps are supported effectively.

Investing in our rep communities

In 2024, we received 1,812 expressions of interest for the rep roles and supported 58 new learning reps, 26 new health and safety reps, and 105 new stewards in becoming fully accredited. However, the learning doesn't stop at the end of the pathway – there's much more to come.

Continuing learning and development (CL&D) offers ongoing opportunities for reps to expand their knowledge, refine skills, and grow professionally. In 2024, we introduced an enhanced

CL&D programme for all reps. Our Reps' Hub now features a variety of valuable resources, including a comprehensive calendar of events where reps can sign up for both online and in-person learning. It also provides opportunities for reps to refresh their skills and gain new knowledge.

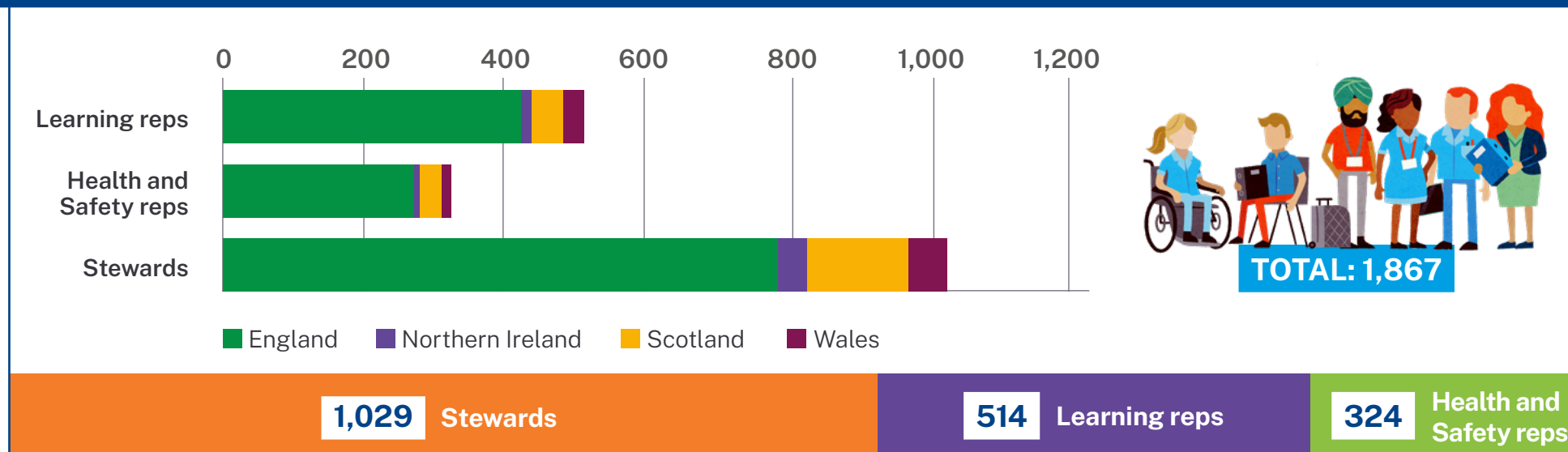
Since its launch in October 2024, we've seen a 209% increase in reps engaging in self-directed learning through the Reps Hub. New and updated content will be added to the site each month.

UK joint reps conferences

In 2024, we welcomed reps to 2 major conferences featuring sessions, workshops and inspirational speakers. At the spring conference, reps delved into topics such as safe staffing, menstrual wellbeing at work, and our preparations for the General Election. At the autumn conference, we celebrated Black History Month and 50 years of health and safety legislation, while also addressing issues like sexual safety at work, work-related suicide, and launching the employment standards for the independent health and social care sector.

Our UK joint reps conferences are empowering learning events for all types of reps, offering a space to share, plan, and take action on issues ranging from workplace-specific concerns to UK-wide campaigns. In 2024, we expanded access by offering live streaming of the conferences, in addition to recording them for later playback. This change is now permanent, increasing our reach and providing greater opportunities for reps who are unable to attend in person.

Reps across the UK (includes those on the pathway)



Student activism

Our student members have remained active in 2024, including supporting their fellow nursing students. Sixty student ambassadors attended the RCN's Student Ambassador Conference where they focused on organising, campaigning and advocating for the future of nursing. This was followed by a successful student activism workshop at RCN HQ in London.

Retired members

In September 2024, 92 retired RCN members gathered for a successful online conference to discuss RCN activism and what it means for retired members. Topics such as early retirement due

to ill health, the Women Against State Pension Inequality (WASPI) campaign, and the history of nursing sparked lively debates and provided opportunities for networking among retired members.

Voting volunteers

Voting volunteers play a crucial role in helping members advocate for Fair Pay for Nursing. In the summer of 2024, 1,588 voting volunteers were recruited across the NHS in England, Scotland and Wales to support pay consultations. Since then, this number has grown to 1,765, as hundreds of volunteers in England have campaigned for direct negotiations with the government. Additionally, 309 volunteers have ordered leaflets to distribute in their workplaces, further amplifying the campaign.

Campaigning

Fair Pay for Nursing

Throughout 2024, the RCN conducted and launched pay consultations on the 2024/2025 pay awards and offers for those working across the UK in the NHS and for independent employers.

On 29 July, the UK government announced the NHS pay award for nursing staff employed on Agenda for Change (AfC) contracts in England. Ministers accepted the recommendations of the NHS Pay Review Body (PRB) and awarded a 5.5% consolidated pay increase across all bands, effective from 1 April 2024.

In England, members working in the NHS voted on their pay award from 8 August to 20 September. During this consultation, the RCN introduced new voting options, making it simple for members to participate in the digital consultation and have their say. A record 145,000 eligible members participated, with two-thirds **(64%) rejecting the 5.5% award**.

On 20 August, negotiations between our Scottish Board, other health trade unions, and the Scottish government concluded with a final offer of a one-year pay deal of 5.5% consolidated across all AfC bands, effective from 1 April 2024. Members working for the NHS in Scotland voted on the offer from 27 August to 20 September. Just over half of eligible RCN members participated, and of those, **61% voted to accept the deal**.

In Wales, a 5.5% pay award for NHS Wales staff on AfC terms and conditions was announced on 10 September 2024. RCN members voted on the offer between 27 September to 4 November, with 72% of those who participated **rejecting the 5.5% award**.

The number of members who took part in the consultation matched the same levels seen in the 2022 industrial action ballot in Wales and the recent consultation on the NHS pay award in England.

In Northern Ireland, pay commitments for health and social care staff faced significant delays. A consultation on a 5.5% pay award was launched in December 2024 and closed on 9 January 2025. **Nearly 73% of members who voted accepted the pay offer** from the Department of Health.

Not just the NHS

In 2023, NHS staff on AfC contracts received 2 one-off payments alongside a 5% pay uplift. However, the government in England did not allocate funding for these one-off payments to staff working on dynamic AfC contracts – those delivering NHS care but employed by organisations such as charities, local authorities and social enterprises.

After long-term campaigning by the RCN, these payments were secured in March 2024 for staff delivering NHS care in social enterprises and independent employers.

Pay consultations were carried out with members across health and social care employers, including (but not limited to) Erskine Veterans Health Care, Four Seasons Health Care and CQC.

UK COVID-19 Inquiry: how we made the voice of nursing heard

Throughout 2024, the UK COVID-19 Inquiry continued and – most notably for us – the College was a core participant in Module 3. Running over autumn 2024, this module focused on the impact of the pandemic on health care systems in the 4 nations of the UK.

As a core participant, we presented evidence, questioned witnesses and held former decision makers to account to ensure the experiences of nursing staff were front and centre. This included our barrister making opening and closing submissions to the inquiry, Rose Gallagher MBE, RCN Professional Lead for Infection Prevention and Control and nursing lead for the COVID-19 Inquiry – giving evidence to the inquiry, and an RCN member also giving evidence.

Our evidence focused on wide-ranging issues that nursing staff faced during the pandemic, including highlighting the inadequate provision of PPE and infection prevention and control guidance, the impact of long COVID on members, and that the nursing profession was shut out from the pandemic response. We also questioned the former health secretary, Matt Hancock, about the absence of reporting on deaths, infection and self-isolation rates during the pandemic.

The report for Module 1 – which focused on resilience and preparedness – was also released in summer 2024. While we hadn't been a core participant in Module 1, the module and the report findings were notable for the College as Rose Gallagher MBE had given evidence to the module in 2023.

The report concluded that the system of building preparedness for the pandemic suffered from several significant flaws, meaning the virus caused more deaths than it should have.

We are also a core participant in Module 6, which is focused on the care sector and made submissions in the first preliminary hearing in 2024, with the module itself running in 2025.

In addition, the RCN successfully applied to be a core participant in the Scottish COVID-19 Inquiry. Our evidence to the health and social care impact hearings, given by Colin Poolman, Executive Director of RCN Scotland and associate directors Eileen McKenna and Norman Provan, highlighted the workforce challenges going into the pandemic and the long-term impact on nursing staff.

We told the closing impact hearing in June that the biggest lesson to be learned from the pandemic was the need to ensure that there was a suitable health and social care workforce in place. We also submitted evidence on the experience of nursing students to the education impact hearing, and preparation is underway for further evidence sessions on the implementation of measures and key decision making, later in the year.

Throughout the College's involvement in the COVID-19 Inquiry, the RCN HQ Communications Directorate has provided updates on key proceedings for our members. We have issued press releases to media outlets at critical moments to amplify the RCN's calls to government and reported on the inquiry with articles shared with members across the RCN's digital channels.

Safe staffing: Corridor care

At Congress 2024, Professor Nicola Ranger, Acting General Secretary and Chief Executive, declared corridor care a national emergency. The RCN has been working to address this by raising awareness of the issue and forming coalitions across health and social care organisations to act as a catalyst for eradicating corridor care.

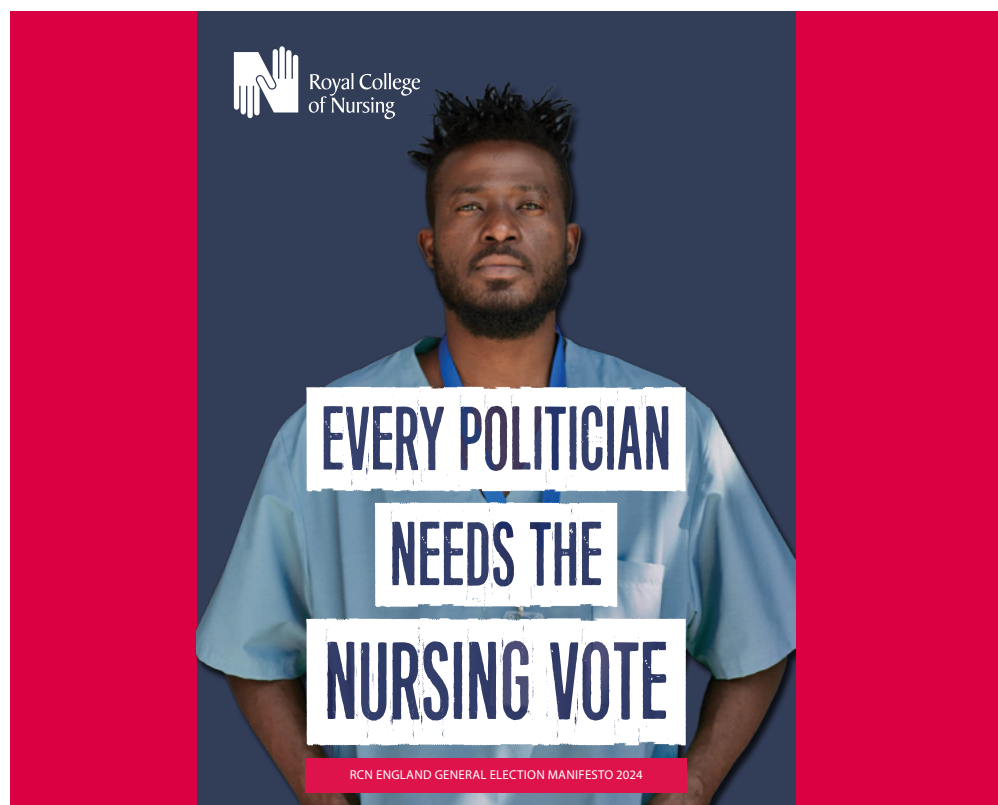
In July 2024, we brought together key stakeholders to tackle the issue of corridor care, starting with a roundtable discussion. By October 2024, health and social care secretary, Wes Streeting, acknowledged that he could not guarantee people wouldn't be lying in A&E corridors this winter. In response, we intensified our efforts to raise awareness of the issue.

In December 2024, thousands of members from across the UK told us about their experiences of delivering corridor care. The report attracted significant media attention in January 2025, and it continues to drive political momentum for our campaign across all 4 countries of the UK.



General election

A snap election was called in May 2024, set for Thursday 4 July. We launched our UK-wide election activity at RCN Congress in June where Professor Nicola Ranger, Acting General Secretary and Chief Executive, unveiled our General Election (GE) Manifesto during her keynote speech and introduced our campaigning priorities to members. Once the new UK government was elected, we continued to work towards these priorities.

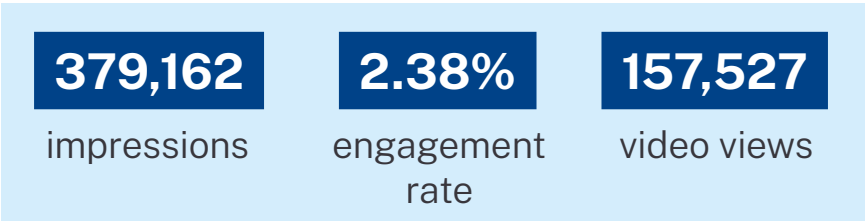


Our GE Manifesto outlined 12 priorities for nursing:

1. Give all nursing staff a substantial pay rise and introduce automatic band 5 to 6 pay progression for NHS nurses.
2. Introduce safety-critical nurse-to-patient ratios in all care settings.
3. Provide legal protection for people raising concerns about unsafe staffing.
4. Fund mental health support for all nursing staff, provided by every employer.
5. Eradicate corridor care, and force reporting of it.
6. Commit to government-funded nursing degrees with a job guarantee for graduates.
7. Revoke legislation restricting the right to strike.
8. Protect the title 'nurse' in law.
9. End exploitation of health and social care workers and properly fund the sector.
10. Provide sufficient funding for continuing professional development.
11. End punitive immigration policies which affect internationally educated nursing staff.
12. Increase overseas aid spending in order to tackle global nursing shortages.

We also launched our GE Manifesto campaign across social media, utilising both paid and organic strategies.

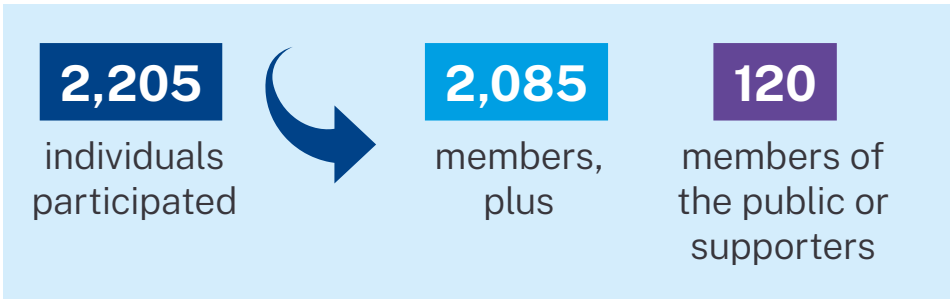
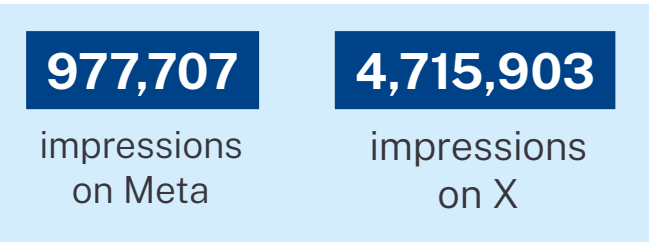
Our organic performance across all social channels was:



These statistics include video content filmed with members during Congress. Part of this video content was a series of short clips of members announcing our GE Manifesto priorities.

We also encouraged members to vote, informed them about the new voter ID requirements introduced in this general election, and emphasised the importance of nursing voices in government decisions.

Paid socials also performed well:



We launched a prospective parliamentary candidate letter too, urging people to commit to our 12 GE Manifesto asks.

Transforming our governance and culture

Throughout 2024, work continued to implement the recommendations of the independent reviews into the governance and culture of our College. A detailed plan and a dedicated project team is assisting in delivering the necessary changes.

During 2024, a joint partnership board of members and staff met regularly to oversee the work, provide leadership and unblock any challenges. Going forward, the Governance Committee will lead on the oversight of the work of the programme.

We've taken care to embed all the recommendations in our *A New Dawn for Nursing: Five-year Strategic Plan 2023-2027*. We recognise that achieving true cultural change takes time, but we are putting all the building blocks in place to enable real transformation.

What we are delivering:

Congress

Progress so far

- Developing the agenda: The current Congress Review is focussed on developing new ways of simplifying the submission of items for discussion at Congress and making the process more inclusive.
- The principles for the changes for Congress are being developed and they will inform the future process.
- The Congress policy has been reviewed to ensure processes are clear and fair.

Coming up

The Strategic Review of Congress continues and the future format of Congress will be determined by RCN Council.

The ICC, Newport, south Wales, home to Congress 2024.



Culture, training and development

We want to create a culture of learning and trust at the College, where members and staff are encouraged to speak up and are supported when they do.

Progress so far

- We've introduced a rolling programme of development for Council and elected members. In 2024, financial governance training and training on fiduciary duties was delivered to Council.
- Our People and Organisational Development department is planning a programme to address culture across the organisation, encompassing our values and how we work with each other.
- Refreshing our respect charter: A review of existing processes around the reporting and resolution of incidents of unacceptable behaviour is taking place.
- A desktop review and process mapping workshop (involving the GMB@RCN branch) has captured the RCN's current policies, procedures and guidelines around the theme of respect at work. This has been explored from the perspectives of both staff and members raising concerns about the behaviour of staff, members, customers and external stakeholders.
- A quarterly finance newsletter is now produced for staff, to make financial governance part of the integrated approach; to promote financial literacy across the organisation and a collective sense of 'value for money' assessments.

Coming up

Work is underway to review various existing policies and guidelines relating to the behaviour of staff, members and others that we come into contact with at the RCN. Through this work, we'll be exploring the routes available to staff and members who wish to report and address concerns, including through our *Respect at Work* policy and *Managing Unacceptable Behaviour* guidelines.

Equity, diversity and inclusion

All members and staff should be treated fairly and given equity of opportunity. We want to be genuinely representative, offering parity and access to influence across our diverse membership.

Progress so far

- We've re-established the Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Committee, appointed an external chair and launched our EDI strategy.
- We've improved the language we use to promote our elections, to actively invite a more diverse pool of candidates.
- We encouraged a wider range of people to take up representative and governance positions. The elections for Council 2025 attracted a far more diverse set of members and has culminated in a more diverse Council.

For the first time, 2 boards applied global majority constraints to their board election processes, alongside regional and sector constraints, stipulating that at least one seat on the board must be filled by a member from the global majority.

Coming up

Learnings from the Forums Review about the appropriate levels of support for the emergent networks, including consideration of the need for formal visibility within the governance structure, will be included in upcoming proposals.

Governance

Our aim is to achieve excellent governance within our large and complex organisation to provide clarity, transparency and accountability in all that we do.

Progress so far

- We've improved the role, function and governance of the forums, and we've introduced a vice-chair position, removing the requirement to be in membership for 3 years before joining a forum committee. This has enabled a reserve list of individuals for future vacancies. We've also introduced a process to establish and disestablish forums.
- We've updated the role descriptions for those in key governance positions and updated terms of office for committees to ensure that responsibilities and remits are clearly defined.
- A document setting out, and explaining the differences in, the roles and responsibilities of Council and the Executive Team has been published on the website.
- A programme of work to strengthen the role of external advisers has been undertaken. External advisers now have full voting rights on the committees they sit on.

- We've updated the Articles of Association for RCNi and the RCN Foundation.
- Policies are now in place for Council members attending events, Council member committee appointments and compensation arrangements for the chair and president.
- An effective feedback loop and communication of what goes on at Council, committees and other forums to the wider members, has been put in place.
- Changes have been made to the standing orders – making the role of Council officers clearer and more distinct.
- Remits of the Trade Union Committee (TUC) and Professional Nursing Committee (PNC) have been accurately defined and delegations to those committees agreed by Council. A process has been established to mitigate against the 'in extremis' revocation of delegated powers to all Council committees.
- We implemented the Scheme of Delegation.

Coming up

Work is ongoing on the remaining recommendations including increasing engagement with, and support of, under-represented members; reviewing terms of office for Council, committees and boards; finalising the governance operating framework; delivering the Council 2-year learning and development programme; and finalisation of defining key roles across RCN Governance.

For more information visit: rcn.org.uk/About-us/Our-governance

Nurses' Day

This year, we celebrated International Nurses' Day with our members on Sunday 12 May. As 2024 was a general election year, we took the opportunity to put the spotlight on the value of nursing and the significant difference that it makes.

We aimed to highlight the urgent need for change by showcasing the remarkable work of our members, while also addressing the challenging conditions they face every day.

Our Nurses' Day film featured 5 case studies, which emphasised the wide range of environments in which nursing staff work and the exceptional skills they bring to their roles.

Other activity for Nurses' Day included:

- member news stories at launch and on the day achieved over 3,000 views in total
- messaging to staff on our intranet and weekly staff email

- sharing member generated social media posts on our channels across the weekend
- a 'thank you' video from the RCN President and General Secretary and Chief Executive, which had over 7,600 views
- organic social media posts in the run up and across the weekend achieved over 1.2 million impressions
- celebrity support from Jo Brand, Ian Marsden and Louise Thompson on social media
- a message from the General Secretary and Chief Executive to RCN members to mark Nurses' Day was covered across regional media.

Nurses' Day in numbers



Nursing Support Workers' Day

Throughout the year, we highlighted the invaluable contributions of nursing support workers (NSWs) to health and social care, culminating in Nursing Support Workers' Day (NSW Day) – a weekend of celebration that began on Saturday 23 November.

Building on the success of the 2023 Nursing Support Workers' conference, the NSW committee decided to once again host a dedicated event for our NSW members. This year, the conference focussed on the importance of diversity and the power of inclusive language, and in alignment with the conference, we selected the importance of diversity as our theme for NSW Day 2024.

Our objective was to demonstrate the diversity of the nursing support workforce, while emphasising the importance of inclusivity within the nursing profession and highlighting the breadth of skills NSWs bring.

We commissioned a film which featured a diverse range of NSWs delivering care in a wide range of environments.

In the run up to and on the day, other activity included:

- a dedicated NSW Day webpage (rcn.org.uk/NursingSupportWorkersDay), which achieved over 6,000 views between the launch on 18 October and the NSW Day weekend
- a resource page with digital content to download, which achieved 3,200 downloads between the launch and the NSW Day weekend
- emails to members at launch and on the day – achieving open rates of 43% and 42% respectively

- member news stories at launch and on the day, and four feature articles, which achieved over 8,000 views in total
- 25,000 free badges sent out with enamel badges available for sale online at the RCN Shop
- promotion to staff via the intranet and weekly staff email
- sharing member generated socials across the weekend
- a thank you video from the RCN President, the NSW Committee and the RCN General Secretary and Chief Executive, attracting over 10,000 views
- an interview with RCN Professional Lead for NSWs, Ofrah Muflahi, in *Nursing Times*.

During the campaign period, we also saw a 27.63% increase in joiners, and 116 new NSWs joined the RCN over the NSW Day weekend celebrations.



Pride in Nursing

Pride events take place across the UK between May and September each year.

We take this opportunity to promote existing materials, resources and digital assets to enhance the visibility of our LGBTQ+ members (and supporters) within the College.

This includes the Pride in Nursing webpage (rcn.org.uk/proud), which acts as an information hub.

We used social media to share magazine articles, downloadable content, Instagram stickers and RCN resources throughout Pride season.

We also used the platform to host details of the local Pride events the College was involved in across the UK, including Pride in London, Trans Pride in Brighton and Hove, and UK Black Pride in London.

We continued our Pride in Nursing campaign throughout 2024. Activities included:

2,337 visits to our webpage

1,583 visits to our badge ordering page

Over 500,000

views of our Pride in Nursing Instagram stickers

Social media posts across our HQ and student channels



Congress: a successful gathering in Newport

Congress 2024 was a landmark event, held for the first time at the ICC in Newport, south Wales. This new location proved successful, with a notable increase in attendance compared to the previous year. By the time booking closed, 3,030 delegates had registered – a 17% increase from the 2,586 attendees in Brighton in 2023.

A significant portion of attendees were RCN activists, with 582 present, while the majority of delegates were RCN members in the nurse category.

A dynamic and engaging programme

The event started on Sunday 2 June, with an opening and awards ceremony featuring various local entertainment acts.

As part of our commitment to recognising excellence in nursing, we presented the following awards:

- 7** Awards of Merit
- 7** Fellowships
- 3** Forum (and Forum Committee) members
- 6** Reps
- 2** Students

The main business of Congress ran from Monday 3 June to Thursday 6 June, featuring 28 debates in the main hall, along with 3 keynote speakers:

- Professor Nicola Ranger, Acting General Secretary and Chief Executive
- Linda Silas, President, Canadian Federation of Nurses Unions
- Gareth Thomas, ex-rugby international and HIV campaigner.

Our diverse programme included 32 learning and wellbeing programme sessions, 3 lectures, the World Café, and a variety of networking events. Special receptions were hosted for nursing support worker members on Monday and for student members on Tuesday, alongside additional country and regional networking opportunities.

The Congress exhibition was a vibrant space, featuring 49 exhibitors and several RCN stands. Notably, over a quarter of the paid-for stands were first-time exhibitors.

Effective promotion and engagement

Congress promotion ran throughout 2024, starting in January when bookings opened.

A multi-channel communication strategy ensured strong engagement from both members and non-members. Email proved to be the most effective driver of bookings, with noticeable spikes following each email.

Students were a key demographic for Congress, with 495 registering to attend. Of these, 41% were in their first year of study, 31% in their second year and 26% in their third year.

While email was again the primary engagement tool, in-person meetings and word-of-mouth also played an important role in encouraging attendance.

Almost 60% of Congress delegates were first-time attendees, bringing fresh ideas to the stage. Additionally, 43% of these delegates had joined the RCN in the previous 12 months.

Delegate diversity

Congress 2024 welcomed a diverse range of delegates, with notable differences in gender and workplace representation, compared to the wider RCN membership.

Gender representation

While 88% of RCN members identify as female, Congress saw a slightly higher proportion of male attendees. Male representation stood at 18.75%, with just over 80% identifying as female.

Ethnic diversity

Congress delegates also reflected a different ethnic profile from the wider RCN membership. While 10.5% of RCN members identify as Asian or British Asian, this group made up just 6.5% of Congress attendees.

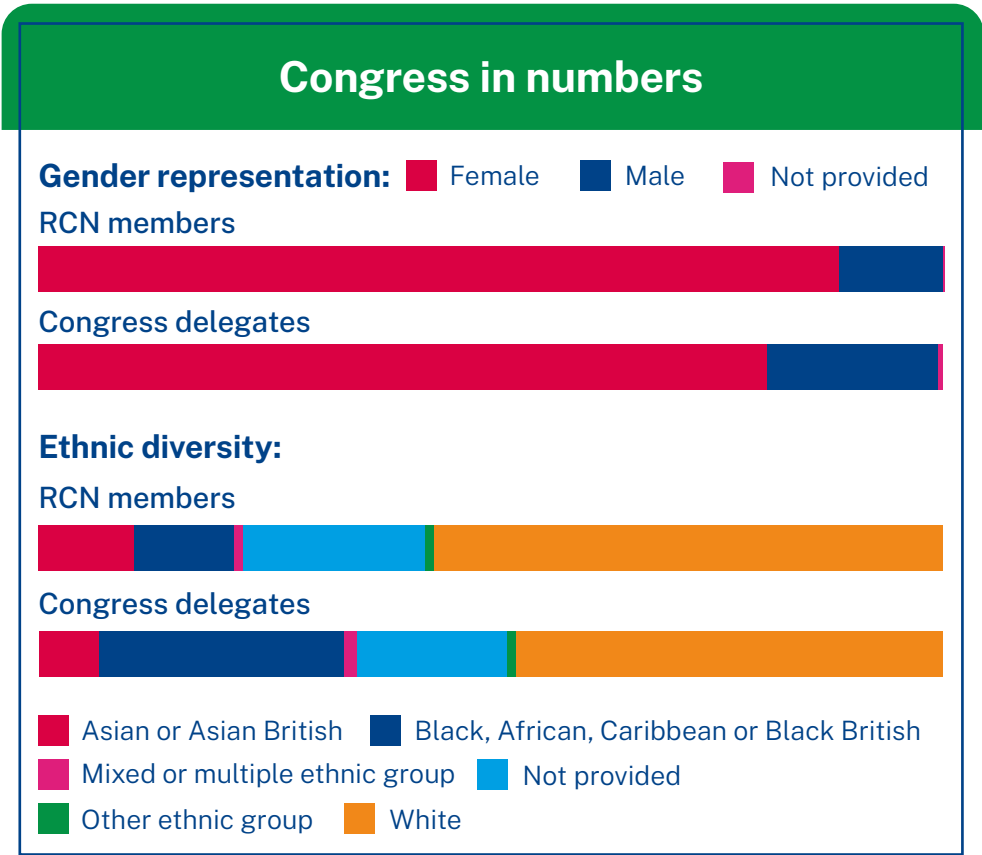
In contrast, Black, African, Caribbean or Black British RCN members were significantly more engaged, making up just over 27% of Congress attendees – more than double their 11.3% representation within overall membership.

Workplace representation

The workplace demographics of Congress attendees differed slightly from the overall RCN membership too. While the majority

of RCN members work in the NHS, Congress delegates saw a higher proportion of those in education and the independent sector. Within the wider membership, 20% work in the independent sector and 10% in education, whereas Congress attendees included 19% from the independent sector and a significantly higher 20% from education.

We arranged coach travel for several students attending Congress, with 50 travelling from the South West region, 113 from Wales, and 100 from the West Midlands region.



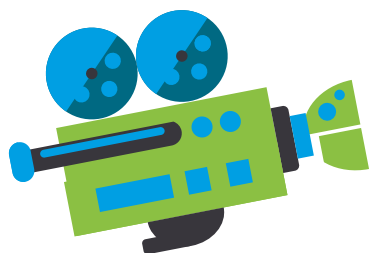
Congress campaign activity

Congress 2024 coincided with the announcement of the snap UK general election. This timing provided an opportunity to launch our general election activity.

During her keynote speech, Professor Nicola Ranger, Acting General Secretary and Chief Executive, unveiled our General Election Manifesto, outlining 12 key asks (see page 27). The manifesto received significant attention, with its webpage attracting 1,450 views on the day of its launch (3 June).

Congress also focussed on the need to represent the internationally educated nursing workforce, and those in social care. We launched our 'End Exploitation in Social Care' open letter, which performed extremely well – gaining 5,655 signatures when it went live on 5 June and reaching 8,366 signatures by its close.





Our Congress
videos achieved

270,151

views between
1-6 June

The corridor care story was our highest-performing feature at Congress. With significant coverage at the start of the week, it set the tone for the days that followed and allowed us to drive the conversation on the ongoing crisis in health and care.

On social media we achieved:

231,705

impressions



10,661 engagements



an engagement rate of

4.53%



Linda Silas, President of
the Canadian Federation of
Nurses Unions, presenting
at Congress 2024.

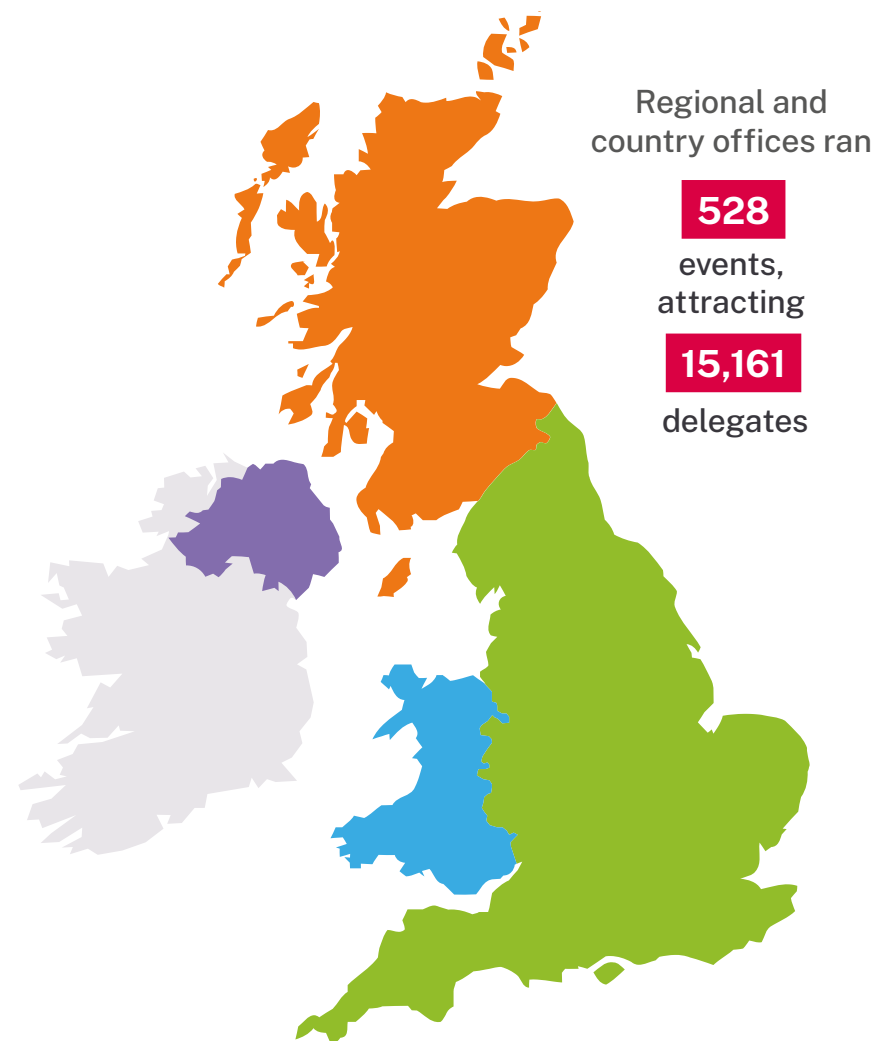
Our events

As well as Congress, our central Events Team hosted 25 events across the UK during 2024. These included our AGM, a range of forum-led events, as well as our Joint Reps conferences. See page 22 for more information.

Our regional and country teams also organised many events throughout the year. They collectively hosted 503 events in 2024, which included:

- record-keeping and accountability workshops for nursing support workers
- library outreach events
- webinars covering pensions, statutory leave and statutory pay
- conferences on care in justice settings, advanced practice, anti-racism, innovating nursing and more
- leadership events for the independent sector
- Nurse of the Year events in Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

**Across the UK we ran 528 events
hosting 27,838 delegates**



Annual general meeting (AGM)

Our 96th Ordinary General Meeting was held on Wednesday 17 July 2024, as a hybrid meeting, both in London and online. It was chaired by our President Sheilabye Sobrany who acknowledged that 2023 had been a truly positive year for the College, which saw it reach record membership levels. She was pleased to say that this upward trend had continued in 2024.

Sheilabye reflected on the financial year from January to December 2023 and our Honorary Treasurer, Carol Webley-Brown, presented the 2023 financial statements. Paul Vaughan, Chair of Council, noted that 2023 had been a strong and productive year for the RCN, and he was delighted to be presenting the significant results Council had delivered for the College, the profession and its members. He also reflected on the progress made in delivering the RCN's 5-year strategy, which was introduced to members at Congress in 2022.

Discussing the RCN as the voice of nursing, Paul highlighted that industrial action was the College's primary focus during the first half of 2023. For the first time in its 107-year history, the RCN secured a mandate from its members to carry out strike action across the UK, with strikes taking place in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

Our members then voted on 2 resolutions; both of which were passed. The first resolution aimed to clearly define the roles of council officers. By introducing a definition in the Standing Orders for the chair, vice chair, and honorary treasurer, the Council ensures clarity regarding key governance positions. This also distinguishes council officer roles from those of the president and deputy president.

Additionally, the changes clarify that no individual may hold more than one officer role simultaneously and that none of the officers can serve as president or deputy president. While this practice is widely understood and aligns with best governance standards, it had not been explicitly stated in the Standing Orders. The resolution was passed with 96.92% of members in favour. The second resolution amended the Standing Orders to explicitly state that candidates may stand for only one role in a Council election.

At the 2023 AGM, members voted to extend the terms of office for current Council members until 31 December 2024. This decision was made to ensure stability while implementing recommendations from the Governance and Culture Review reports. As a result, a new Council was elected at the end of 2024, including both regional/country seats and the president and deputy president positions. Typically, these elections are held in separate years, but this alignment, though unprecedented, will become the standard process in the future. The new Council assumed office on 1 January 2025. This resolution was passed with 97.04% of members supporting it.



Support and services provided

Providing expert advice and support

Throughout 2024, we provided vital information, guidance and support to members all over the UK. RCN Direct (RCND) continued to offer help and advice online and over the telephone, while our country, regional, Employment Relations and Legal teams represented members with case work and provided expert assistance.

Across the year, RCND handled 93,037 member contacts across all channels (41.8% of these were referred to other RCN departments for further support), and the RCND Statement Team checked just under 1,000 statements. Our virtual assistant handled 12,280 conversations to support members in finding information online. 11% of these conversations were handled by the virtual assistant outside of normal working hours.

Our advice information co-ordinators continued to triage social media posts relating to our main accounts. In 2024, we handled 63,403 posts in total.

Our 85 plus member advice guides continued to be popular, with a total of just under 1 million views in 2024. Our most popular guides provided information on Agenda for Change, sickness, the duty of care, and having a family. The team has worked with colleagues in the Employment Relations Team and Legal Team to manage a rolling review schedule to ensure all guides had an expert review at least once in 2024.

Employment advice



84,846

Calls



2,285

Web chats



32,079

Emails

... which led to **26,494** referrals through to regions and countries.
Plus **963** statements for members checked.

Members support services

7,384

Counselling service sessions

510

Careers service sessions



393

New cases opened by welfare services

695

New cases opened by immigration services

62,301

Hits to all MSS webpages



Legal

1,900

Members supported who had been referred to the NMC/ DBS or involved in an inquest or fatal accident inquiry

1,081

Members supported with employment law matters

963

Members supported with personal Injury matters with over £3.5m recovered in personal injury compensation

1,137

Members provided with advice on wills and probate matters across England and Wales

1,901

Calls received to the free 30-minute legal helpline for a range of non-work-related legal issues affecting members

£1.3m

Recovered in compensation from employment cases UK-wide

These figures take into account the work by Scotland agents and RCNLaw.

Our top 5 contact areas in 2024 were:

1

Disciplinary

2

Contractual rights

3

Ill health

4

Legal

5

Finance

Our Employment Relations and regional and country teams provided advice to members on various issues throughout 2024. They opened 15,096 cases, with disciplinary, ill health and contractual rights accounting for 62% of these cases. 4,395 of these were managed by workplace representatives.

2024 followed the same trend as previous years with the majority of members accessing legal services for matters relating to the NMC. Throughout 2024, the team saw an increase in members accessing the support of the employment legal team.

Career coaching case study

A member reached out to the RCN after exploring our online career resources. She wanted to schedule a career coaching session to identify her strengths and explore roles that aligned with them.

After completing the pre-appointment questionnaire, the member disclosed having a long-term mental health condition and a history of developmental trauma, which impacted her confidence. She had become a nurse following a positive experience as a support worker but no longer felt fulfilled in her nursing career.

During the coaching sessions, the coach explored the reasons behind her feelings of overwhelm, including aspects of imposter syndrome and self-doubt. She often dismissed potential job opportunities based on negative self-talk, despite consistently receiving positive feedback in her roles. The coach helped her examine the evidence for these feelings and recognised her professional value.

They also discussed work environments that would better suit her needs. As a first step, the member agreed to conduct more targeted research and complete career coaching exercises. A follow-up session was scheduled.

Review progress

In the next session, they reviewed her research, the progress she had made, and key themes that emerged from the coaching exercises. She identified an interest in becoming a practice nurse but was struggling with her CV. The coach provided feedback on her CV and discussed the role's pros and cons, helping her assess how it aligned with her strengths and values.

Outcome and feedback from member

"I attended a couple of career guidance sessions through the RCN a few months ago, and I just wanted to share that I've now secured a job as a practice nurse – and I'm loving it! While the role is demanding, and time management can be challenging, it is both interesting and fulfilling.

"I just wanted to say a big 'thank you'. The coaching sessions played a key role in helping me decide to pursue a career in practice nursing, and the support I received from the RCN with my CV was instrumental in securing the job."

The Welfare Service helped members navigate life events that have impacted their finances. In 2024, internationally recruited members seeking advice from the service continued to rise, as the 'no recourse to public funds' restrictions increased the risk of members falling into financial hardship when unexpected challenges arise.

The service has also continued to assist members with long COVID, renew or make claims for Industrial Injuries Disablement Benefit; and over 30 members were able to avoid eviction and homelessness through our negotiations with landlords or making representations to the court.

Our Careers Team and coaches, working in collaboration with Careers Fairs across the country, provided advice for those experiencing a career crossroads. The team also provided 510 career coaching sessions for members, including CV/supporting statement checks – a 22% increase from 2023; and reported 404,000 visits to the careers resources homepage.

Our Peer Support Service launched new resources for students on placement and members with long term conditions. Our pilot placement adjustments passport, for students needing reasonable adjustments while on placement, will be trialled for 1 academic year and feedback will then be used to refine the product in 2025.

Immigration services advised and supported 523 members throughout 2024, with a total number of 851 appointments. Our top issues included applications for indefinite leave to remain, dependant visa applications (most queries were about questioning sole parental responsibility), skilled worker

visa applications and termination of employment. We also experienced an increase in high-risk cases, especially where the member had a deadline to respond to a Home Office request for documents or administrative review.



Welfare Service case study

Seatha*, an RCN member who was on a visa, was referred to our Welfare Team to explore whether she was eligible for financial assistance. A series of incidents at her workplace had affected her wellbeing and resulted in her being placed in temporary hostel accommodation.

Advice and representation

As Seatha was receiving statutory sick pay, she wasn't eligible for any further benefits due to her immigration status and had no savings – it was likely she'd become homeless once her temporary housing ended. We explored Seatha's housing priorities and due to the nature of the temporary housing, her preference was to move to privately rented accommodation.

Seeking charitable funding

Access to charitable funding is limited for health care support workers, and Cavell has recently changed its eligibility criteria to only fund qualified nurses. However, the RCN's Welfare Team spoke to Cavell explaining Seatha's circumstances as the victim of coercion and abuse, and the organisation was able to award Seatha £1,000 towards a rental deposit.

The Welfare Team also contacted the RCN Foundation's Benevolent Fund and helped Seatha complete the online financial statements. The RCN Foundation was able to push through the application under special arrangements and pledged £500.

Within 72 hours, Seatha had secured £1,500 towards a deposit and the first month's rent, and was able to start looking for a property. The Welfare Team also sought assistance from a food bank and helped Seatha to complete forms to qualify for free prescriptions.

Moving forward

Seatha had further issues she wanted to resolve, so she was also referred to the RCN's Counselling Service. Seatha is now on a slow phased return to work and is waiting to move into a new studio flat.

*Member's name has been changed.

Library and Archives

In 2024, our library successfully re-applied for customer service excellence. Out of a criteria of 57, we achieved an amazing 28 'compliance plus' and 29 'compliance' results, placing our service at the top of the sector.

New initiatives

We launched a cloud-based library services platform to introduce an integrated suite of library management and discovery applications to efficiently manage workflows and improve member access to collections and services.

The library reviewed its classification and subject heading schemes to remove outdated and offensive terminology. Two new eBook collections were added: '*Transforming Nursing Practice*', comprising 64 titles on core topics for pre-registration student nurses, and a collection which supports nursing associate practice. An impressive 500+ literature searches were completed on a variety of topics, including nursing workforce planning, compassionate leadership and RCN Congress.

Outreach

Outreach work continued with the library team joining a number of forum days and attending promotional events, including 69 university events.

The team also attended the RCN's research conference, the education conference, Nursing Live and RCN Congress.

Exhibitions and events

We launched 2 temporary exhibitions in collaboration with the RCN History of Nursing Forum. *Shining a Light: A History of Nursing Support Work* launched in May. Member volunteers worked closely with the Nursing Support Worker Committee, contributing content, personal items and stories.

In November, we launched *You Mean the World: Nursing in a Climate Crisis*, created in collaboration with the RCN professional lead for sustainability. The exhibition explored the past, present and future of nursing in the face of the climate emergency. It featured a successful partnership with Nottingham Trent School of Art and Design, displaying a range of textile and fashion designs from *PPE Refashioned*: a project to create sustainable protective gowns for health care staff.

Development started for a new main exhibition, *The Art of Nursing*, with a sign painting studio in September 2024 with artist Peter Liversidge. This culminated with a display of nursing signs on the railings outside RCN HQ in London, which will be further developed as a key feature in the exhibition, launching in 2025.

The library events programme saw more members participating in library teaching, than in the past 3 years, and our Royal Literary Fellowship programme continues to develop our members' writing skills through workshops with published writers. The 2024 public events programme included Windrush Day, which explored generations of migration, tours of 20 Cavendish Square through our continued participation in Open House London, and the launch of *You Mean the World: Nursing in a Climate Crisis* exhibition.

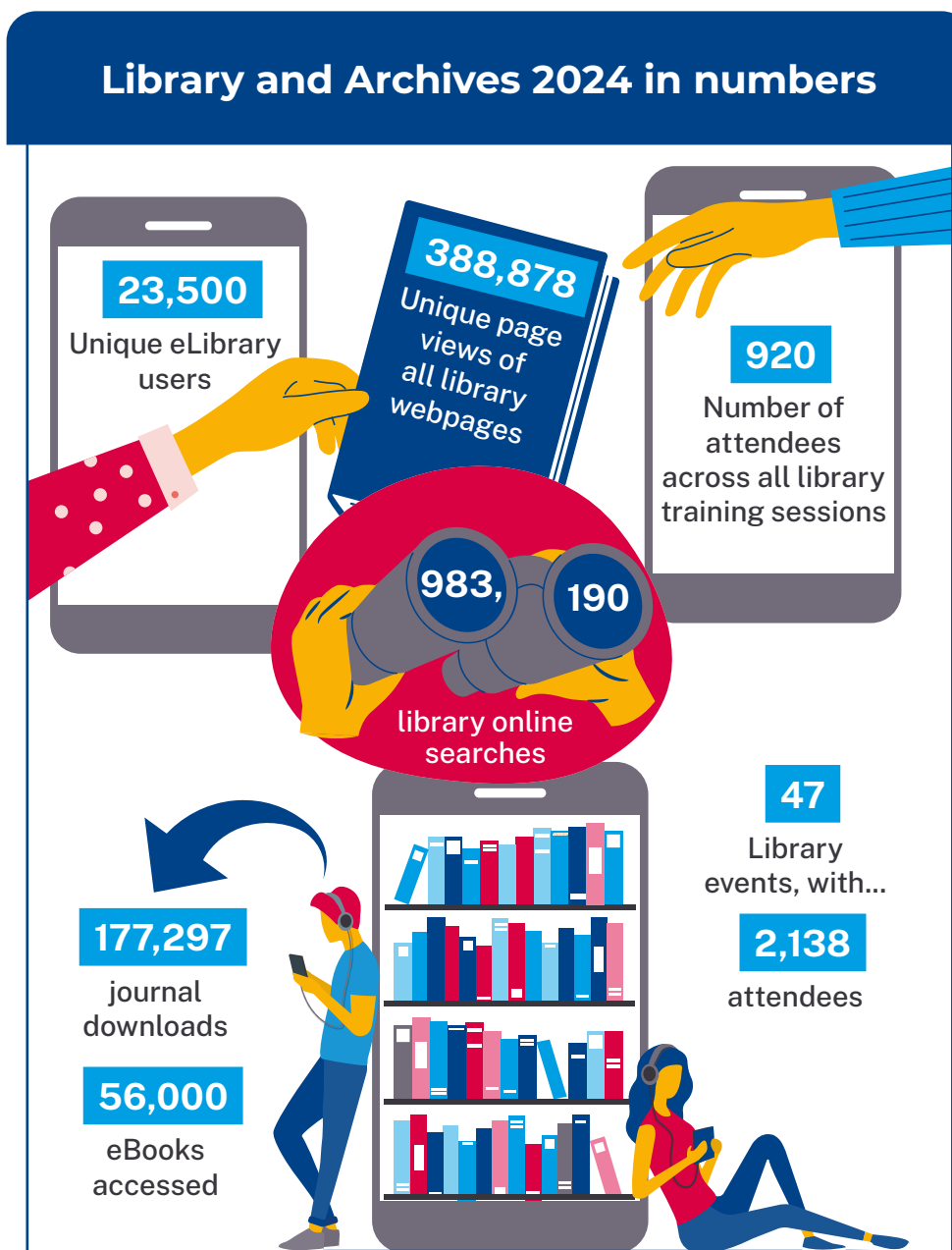
Archives

2024 was a record year for archival enquiries (1,342 enquires were made from all around the world) and 420 donations were accepted. Donations included a range of personal papers of nurses, some dating back to the First World War and 2 substantial artworks depicting nurses created in 1918 and 2024.

New collection catalogues and research information was added online too, including photo, badge and postcard collections, biographies of nurses and RCN historical information. The team also digitised RCN forum newsletters dating back to the 1970s and the College's early correspondence collection (1915-1925) to aid researchers, both will launch online in 2025.

New technology also enabled the Archive Team to expand member access to digital content in the archives, including digital records and oral history recordings. During the year, the Archive Team collaborated with the IT Team to pilot an internal records management system – enabling key RCN business and governance records to be collected directly into the RCN Digital Archive, to improve data security and GDPR compliance.

Early in 2024, the team started work on cataloguing the RCN's substantial education records. Once complete, it will allow access to course programmes, syllabuses and educational initiatives over the last century, including an online photographic collection, sound and film recordings.



Thank you

RCN Council would like to thank all members who played an active role in the organisation in 2024, including our learning representatives, safety representatives and stewards, board, branch and committee members, and all those who have taken part in campaigns, and all our other events. Your voice matters.

We would also like to thank the external advisers to all RCN Group committees, for their knowledge, commitment and expertise.

We would like to express our warmest thanks to LV= and Quilter Financial Advisers for their substantial support in 2024.



The same thanks go to all the other companies, groups and individuals – far too numerous to list here – who help to make our work possible.

We would also like to thank all RCN staff, Rachel Armitage, Managing Director of RCNi and Deepa Korea, Director of RCN Foundation, the boards and trustees of RCNi and the RCN Foundation and all of their staff for their tireless work for the RCN Group.



Royal College of Nursing
20 Cavendish Square
London
W1G 0RN
rcn.org.uk