

A NEW DAWN FOR NURSING:

Five-year strategic plan:
halfway health check

A LETTER FROM NICOLA RANGER

Hello,

I was delighted and honoured to be appointed as your General Secretary and Chief Executive in July 2024. Since then I have had the privilege of meeting thousands of members from across the UK and hearing about the brilliant work you do and the very real pressures you face.

When we launched *A New Dawn for Nursing* at Congress in 2023, we set out a bold and ambitious vision to champion, inspire, and support nursing through a five-year strategic plan. At its heart was a recognition of the specialist knowledge, complex skills, and clinical expertise that nursing staff bring to patient care every single day – and the urgent need for nursing to be better respected, recognised, and rewarded.

Now, at the halfway point, our commitment remains unchanged – but the context we're

working in has continued to evolve. Nursing staff are still facing unacceptable working conditions, unsafe staffing levels, and uncertainty about pay. If we do not address these challenges with urgency and clarity, we risk a future with too few nurses to deliver safe, effective care.

This halfway health check reflects what has been achieved and what has changed – and it sharpens our strategic priorities for the remaining years of the plan. Since 2023, we have:

- launched a campaign for mandated career progression from Band 5 to Band 6 within Agenda for Change
- advocated for safe staffing – including the implementation of safety ratios and solutions to workforce shortages
- established the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence, with appointed heads of the Institute and its specialist academies
- explored new models and opportunities in undergraduate and pre-registration education, including financial modelling for loan forgiveness to boost the domestic nursing supply
- raised national awareness of the growing corridor care crisis, contributing to commitments from the UK governments to take action
- launched our *Activism Strategy* to provide a framework for member-led change and activism
- launched our *Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy*

- maintained our commitment to responsible stewardship of the RCN, with a focus on transparency and financial sustainability
- grown our membership to half a million members by targeting areas of strategic opportunity
- begun work to attract, develop and retain a diverse, high-performing workforce.

Find out more about the work in each of these areas on pages 10-23.

This strategy was never meant to sit on a shelf. It is a living document, shaped by the insight and experience of our members, and driven by the belief that nursing deserves better. Nursing is an amazing career but sadly continues to be often not understood and is not properly valued.

We had a vision for nursing and now we are developing specific campaigns, activities, programmes and projects to ensure that this vision becomes a reality.

Since 2023, we've further reviewed and refined the 12 priorities under each of our four goals into 10 tangible key areas (our new priorities). These priorities zero in on the main activities which will deliver the strategy and will continually be reviewed to ensure we are making the biggest possible difference to the way nursing is valued as a profession.

With your continued involvement and leadership, our strategy gives us a strong platform to stay focused, stay ambitious, and drive the positive change we all want to see for our amazing profession.



INTRODUCTION

In 2023 we launched our five-year strategy; *A New Dawn for Nursing*. Together, we laid a roadmap for change, to capitalise on our strengths and tackle our weaknesses. We set out a route to guide us to become the best organisation we can be.

Two years on, the landscape around us has changed with a new Westminster government, alongside a succession of new appointments and interruptions in country governments. International events have further impacted on our economy and political and social issues are polarising public opinion.

Making sure we find opportunity in the changes and challenges we face; the new RCN Council has taken an uncompromising lead in directing our strategy – keeping our member voice central to achieving our ambitions.

Never before has the College had so many members to contribute to our achievements. More than 570,000 of you represent every corner of the nursing profession both in the NHS and the independent sector. Aligning our activity and outcomes with your vision has seen us transform our approach to delivering our work. Data has become integral to how we make decisions and form plans. We're analysing facts and figures, seeking consultation and feedback and drawing from our vast pool of member expertise to evidence how we drive forward our four goals.

Our Council, who appointed a new General Secretary and Chief Executive in 2024, works closely with the Executive Team to ensure delivery of the strategy. College-wide organisational planning places the 'big picture' at the heart of operations, with

strategic goals running through to the fine detail of what every team and individual has on their to-do list. Additionally, a robust reporting structure ensures that two-way communication between staff and council members is comprehensive, supportive and productive. It's essential that our internal processes are healthy if we want to thrive overall.

Improving our culture and governance underpins our whole strategy and our commitment to creating a positive, inclusive environment that reflects our core values. Our strength is rooted in our numbers, so it is non-negotiable that every one of us must have a voice and feel welcome in our organisation.

Sadly, we are currently witnessing world leaders roll back equity, diversity and inclusion (EDI) programmes, and there is increased unrest around immigration.

As a College, now is the time we demonstrate our unwavering commitment to the *EDI Strategy* we launched last year. We recognise that EDI matters to our profession and to the people we care for. We are anti-discrimination.

The RCN commands respect. Our name is recognised throughout the nursing profession, both at home and internationally, and our standards are a reflection of who we are. With this comes the responsibility of leadership. We will demonstrate to our peers that we are active in our cultural journey, embracing the change that will make us leaders of inclusion. Leading by example is enshrined in our EDI strategy, which underpins every step we take on our journey of change.

Along with the essential evolution of our culture and governance, the way we approach our work is changing too.

We have provided vital services to members for almost 110 years, but this is no longer enough. Our strategy emphasises empowering our members to organise from our grassroots up, supporting you to proactively and collectively address issues where you believe we need to take action. With trade union representatives at the heart of our campaigning, their skills and experience give us unrivalled insight to inform how we engage with the issues and challenges we face.

And those challenges remain. Nursing pay, recruitment and retention, safe staffing levels and the respect with which our profession should be held are still pressing issues. This strategy provides a mechanism through which we can effectively focus our energy and resources to consistently fight our corner. Now our members lead from the front. Our voice

is louder, and our strength is greater as our numbers grow. Our journey of change is bringing us closer together and has aligned us in purpose and determination.

Now, as we reach the halfway point of our strategy, we can be proud of the action we have taken to get us to here alongside the tangible moments of change-making that have put us on course to do better. There is still much to be done and if we are truly to succeed, our journey will continue long after this strategy, with new goals and priorities defining the aspirations of our organisation and our members. Now we must build on our momentum to deliver our four goals.

We are excited to continue our journey and feel confident that by 2027 we will not just be stronger, but more ambitious than ever.

STRATEGIC PLAN GOALS AND PRIORITIES

This five-year strategic plan has been developed with four agreed goals. These are:

Goal 1

The RCN as the
Voice of Nursing.

Goal 2

The RCN has an
engaged, thriving and
diverse membership.

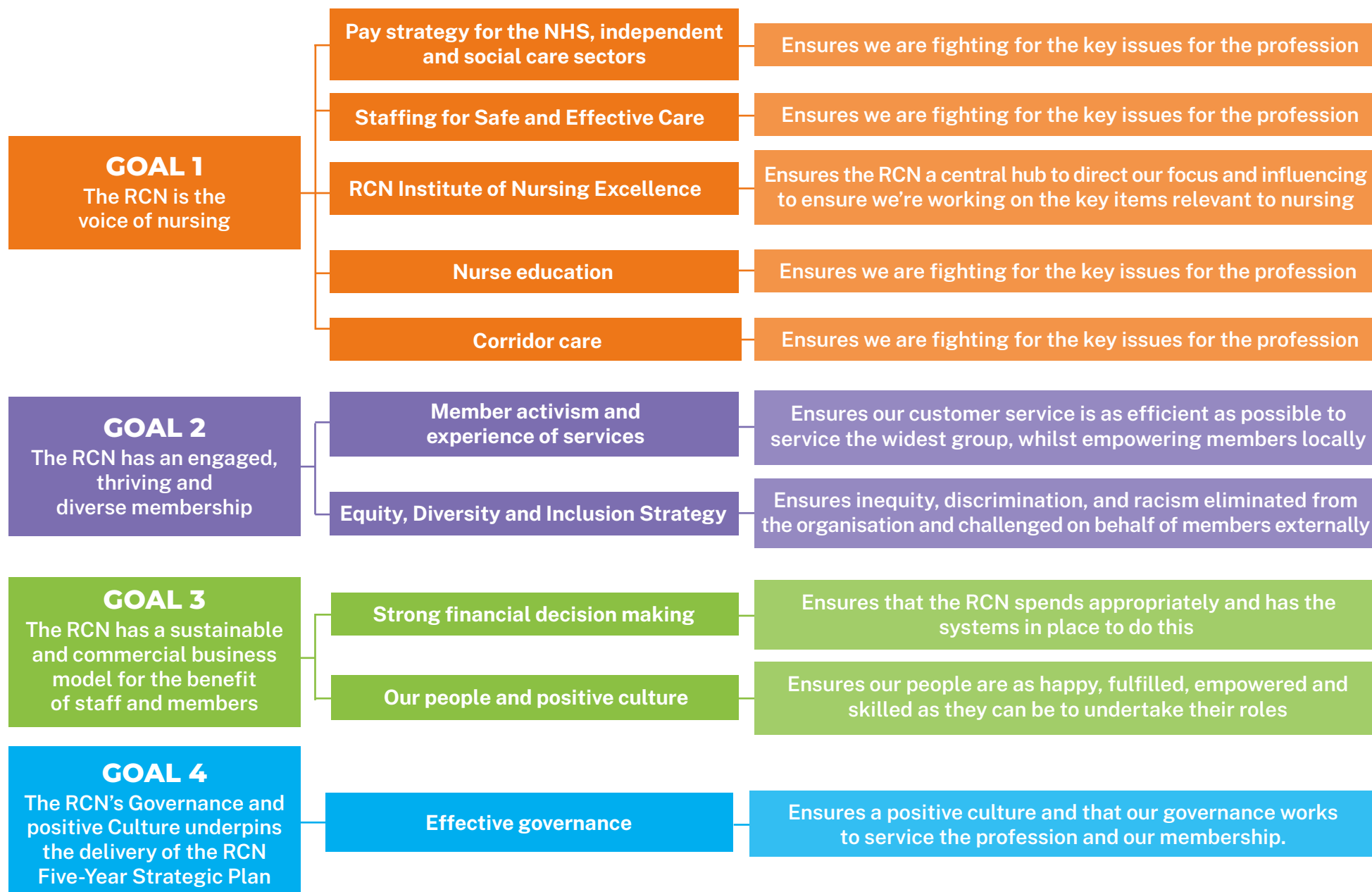
Goal 3

The RCN has a
sustainable and viable
business model.

Goal 4

The RCN's governance
and positive culture
underpin the delivery
of the strategy.

These goals are interdependent. However, for the purpose of this strategic plan they have been separated into four goals and their associated priorities.





Will there be
enough staff when
you need care?

Today's shortages
cost lives

N
Royal College
of Nursing

 **FAIR PAY**
FOR NURSING

It's time
to pay
nursing

 **SAFE STAFFING**
SAVES LIVES

Will there be
enough staff when
you need care?

Today's shortages
cost lives

 **Royal College
of Nurses**

SAFE STAFFING
SAVES LIVES

Goal 1:

The RCN as the Voice of Nursing

Our current priorities:

**Pay strategy for the NHS,
independent and
social care sectors**

**Staffing for safe
and effective care**

**RCN Institute of
Nursing Excellence**

Nurse education

Corridor care

Goal 1: The RCN as the Voice of Nursing

Pay strategy for the NHS, independent and social care sectors

Band 5-6 Pathway to progression

A mandated universal mechanism for progression within Agenda for Change from Band 5 to 6 with a detailed and funded implementation plan.

We know that our workforce is weighted to the bottom of Agenda for Change and a lack of career progression is a real barrier to recruiting and retaining nursing staff. At the heart of the campaign is a proposal to utilise Annex 20 of the Agenda for Change framework to support pay progression following a period of preceptorship. We have launched our *Pathway to Progression* campaign in Scotland, focussing on securing fair, structured pay progression for nursing staff from Band 5-6. This builds on, and takes learning from, the ongoing review of Band 5 nursing roles secured by RCN Scotland as part of previous pay negotiations.

A detailed report was launched at Congress in May 2025, setting out our arguments and policy positions, including the need for a fully funded implementation plan. We have actively engaged with both the Westminster government and the NHS Staff Council to press for the widespread rollout of this approach. These discussions highlight the importance of recognising skills development, improving retention, and providing a clear, nationally consistent progression pathway for nurses.

Further policy development is taking place through a joint approach between the Employment Relations Team and our Institute of Nursing Excellence. This work focuses on identifying best practice options for a nationally mandated, competency-based framework linked to pay progression. A range of communications are in development to support member engagement and raise the campaign's profile. This includes a dedicated Pathway to Progression

webpage on our website, social media activity, and targeted email updates. Members are showing strong support for the campaign through active participation in advocacy and campaigning.

Key deliverables for 2025 include:

- continued policy engagement with NHS Staff Council and four-country government ministers
- publication of the *Pathway to Progression* policy paper
- development of a suite of digital campaign materials
- early-stage development of a preceptorship-led competency framework aligned to pay progression.

Together, these activities aim to secure fairer career progression for nursing staff, supporting workforce retention and professional development, while reinforcing the RCN's role as a leading voice for nursing in the UK.

GP nursing representation

Secure as a minimum the equivalent of NHS Agenda for Change pay scales, terms and conditions, along with a mechanism for influencing an annual pay uplift for general practice nurses and dedicated, ringfenced funding for general practice nursing pay.

We have developed a clear and comprehensive policy position on general practice nursing (GPN) pay, which is being actively communicated to GPN members. This work recognises the unique employment context of GPNs and the need for a distinct, equitable approach to pay.

We continue to influence government policy across all four UK nations, advocating for a dedicated GPN pay framework underpinned by ringfenced funding and an annual uplift cycle.

Formal engagement has taken place through correspondence with relevant ministers, outlining our position and proposed solutions.

Strong partnership working has also been established with key external stakeholders, including the BMA and Local Medical Committees (LMCs), to raise the profile of GPN pay and build collaborative pressure for change.

We have launched a dedicated member education programme and are delivering regular communications to GPNs, ensuring they remain informed and engaged on pay-related matters. Efforts have also been made to strengthen the evidence base, with improved data collection through the RCN Employment Survey and targeted GPN surveys.

Key deliverables for 2025 include:

- submitting evidence to the Doctors and Dentists' Remuneration Body (DDRB) to support the case for GPN pay reform
- continued ministerial engagement across the UK
- hosting webinars to update GPNs and capture live feedback
- expanding the reach and frequency of communications through web, email, and social media channels
- collecting data to support evidence-based advocacy.

This integrated approach aims to secure recognition, fairness, and long-term improvement in GPN pay – ensuring this vital part of the nursing workforce is valued and supported across the health system.

Staffing for safe and effective care

To demonstrate leadership in advocating for safe staffing – maximum safety-critical nurse to patient ratios – addressing workforce shortages, in line with RCN priorities and published research.

A comprehensive programme of work is underway to strengthen the evidence base, influence policy, and support campaigning around safe staffing ratios.

By the end of 2025, the first edition of the Ratios Repository will be published. This centralised reference document will compile existing data and evidence across health settings, helping to identify gaps and opportunities for future research.

A campaign strategy on staffing ratios will be finalised by the end of 2025, providing

a clear and coherent long-term approach to engaging members, mobilising public support, and influencing decision-makers. This strategy will also aim to raise awareness across the profession about the importance and impact of safe staffing levels.

A rapid academic evidence review on ratios across clinical settings will be completed by the end of 2025. This review will help ensure a comprehensive understanding of current research and inform potential 'red-line' issues for future campaigning.

By the end of 2025, work will be undertaken to refine our approach to:

- economic evaluation – strengthening the case for ratios through societal cost analysis
- skill mix stock-take – assessing current workforce composition and trends.

The updated *Nursing Workforce Standards* was launched at Congress in May 2025, empowering nursing professionals to advocate for the connection between staff wellbeing, patient safety, and productivity. An evaluation framework to assess the impact of these standards will be finalised by the end of the year.

We will also begin co-designing accessible Worklives and Wellbeing resources with the University of Surrey, helping to translate evidence into practical tools.

An internal research team will be in place by quarter four 2025, building in-house capability to support high-quality evidence development around staffing ratios.

RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence

Deliver a successful RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence.

The RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence has now been launched, and the transition from the former Nursing Department to a fully operational Institute is complete. Ongoing change to the Institute is making progress across each academy with deliverables aligning to the strategic plan.

Key leadership roles have been established, including the appointment of the director of the Institute, and associate directors have been recruited across all five academies – building on existing roles and structures.

Two major strategic deliverables are scheduled for completion by the end of 2025:

1. A comprehensive 2025+ plan will outline the Institute's future direction and prioritise areas of maximum impact. This plan will guide the next phase of work and inform further deliverables, ensuring all efforts are focused, aligned, and measurable. Key focus areas include:
 - establishing a more stable foundation across structure, finance, operations, commercial activity, research staffing, and culture
 - enabling full integration and effective collaboration across all five academies
 - enhancing internal and external communication and profile
 - creating a mechanism for member engagement through the Nursing Excellence Support Tool (NEST), enabling connection with resources and peer networks
 - developing and agreeing a clear vision and long-term strategy, approved by the Executive Team and Council
 - building an infrastructure to support income generation, supported by robust systems and governance
- advancing plans for research and evidence development in line with the Institute's founding vision
- sustaining staff motivation and morale throughout the transition and beyond.
2. A refreshed statement of the Institute's purpose, critical success factors, and goals will be finalised. This will provide greater clarity across the organisation, strengthen the Institute's identity, and ensure alignment with the College's broader strategic objectives.

Together, these deliverables will provide a renewed strategic foundation for the RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence, enhancing its visibility, cohesion, and long-term impact across the organisation and the wider nursing community.

Nurse education

To fully explore new opportunities and solutions in undergraduate/pre-registration nurse education; ensure quality at the end of pre-registration education routes; and to develop financial modelling for loan forgiveness and other systems UK-wide, to enhance the domestic supply and student experience.

Our nursing supply report for England *Fixing the Leaking Pipeline* was published in March 2025, and our influencing directed the Department of Health roundtable where loan forgiveness was a key theme.

Significant progress will be driven by two sub-priority areas: nursing education and domestic supply/financial modelling.

1. Nursing education – In quarter three we will have a scoping document setting out the campaign’s objectives, the key challenges in nursing education, and the proposed tactical approach. This will be followed in quarter three 2025 by a four-nations senior discussion, to build consensus on our position.

The RCN Education Summit, scheduled for November 2025, will serve as a platform to test key hypotheses, gather insights, and complete the final data collection for the Nursing Education Review. The review itself will also conclude in November 2025, shaping our future policy stance.

In quarter four of 2025, a formal position statement on education will be published. This will present the evidence base and outline our recommendations for reform, with a focus on addressing placement shortages, unclear career pathways, and low uptake of specialist

roles. The aim is to reduce attrition and enhance the overall appeal of the nursing profession.

2. Domestic supply and financial modelling – In February, we submitted proposals to NHS England’s 10-Year Health Plan, underlining the impact of loan forgiveness on recruitment and retention, supported by commissioned research.

In March 2025, we published *Fixing the Leaking Pipeline*, a report outlining strategies to expand and retain the nursing workforce, including student loan forgiveness recommendations.

In the first half of 2025, further influencing activity includes letters to Student Finance England, the Department for Work and Pensions, and DHSC/DfE, calling for cross-government action, enhanced student support, and fair benefit entitlements for nursing students.

Corridor care

To sustain increased awareness of the ‘corridor care’ crisis and its impact on patients, care safety, effectiveness and experience as well as staff wellbeing, and be the catalyst for decision makers to eliminate corridor care.

The campaign focuses on lobbying, media engagement, and political pressure across the UK to secure system-wide commitments to end corridor care.

Key deliverables include securing a commitment from England to begin recording corridor care data by quarter one, with a similar commitment sought by Scotland in quarter four. Northern Ireland achieved this commitment in the first analysis of findings, due in October 2025.

The UK Government is being lobbied to increase community nursing investment in the quarter three Comprehensive Spending Review.

The campaign aims to influence regulatory frameworks. It seeks to ensure the 2026 NHS Standard Contract mandates service providers to restrict and report inappropriate care settings, including Temporary Escalation Spaces (TES). By quarter four 2025, inspections by UK regulators (CQC, RQIA, HIS, CI, HIW, CIW) should include scrutiny of care in such spaces.

Alongside influencing, the campaign builds evidence and provides resources. Updated UK-wide survey data and testimonials were published in June to show corridor

care is not just a winter issue. Guidance is available on our website, and public-facing materials were launched and will be followed up with a wider awareness campaign later in the year.

To track progress, a UK-level scorecard will be developed in quarter four monitoring movement against 2024 recommendations on workforce, infrastructure, and investment.

Research comparing UK bed capacity with other European nations will also be completed. Work on the “drop and go” model begins by year-end. Throughout 2025, member-led local lobbying will continue, ensuring grassroots action supports national advocacy.

...for taking an active stance against
both institutional and individual acts of discrimination
in all forms.

**We will have used the full extent of our influence across
the health and care sector to encourage employers to build
inclusive, anti-racist organisations.**

We will have supported our members to
and confident in asserting their worth
for themselves and others as allies to
underrepresented, or excluded individuals.

We thank everybody who contributed to this college.
who will continue to give so much to the college.

UNDERSTAND ME

Equity is our
clear ambition.
Diversity is our
underused asset.
Inclusion is
our future.



CONNECT ME

Equity is our
clear ambition.
Diversity is our
underused asset.
Inclusion is
our future.



Equity Diversity

Goal 2:

The RCN has an engaged, thriving and diverse membership

Our current priorities:

**Member activism and
experience of services**

**Equity, diversity and
inclusion strategy**

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

Member activism and experience of services

Strengthen the influence of the membership across the health and social care system, for advancement of the profession and in members' workplaces, expanding the number and impact of activists and providing the means so that the RCN can organise for change.

A set of strategic deliverables has been outlined to support the development and implementation of our Activism Strategy. These aim to strengthen organisational direction, staff engagement, and member-led organising.

Early in 2025, a communications plan for the *Activism Academy Strategy* was agreed, ensuring clear internal

messaging and engagement. The *Activism Academy Strategy 2025-2027*, providing a formal framework to guide activism work across the organisation, was launched on 2 June 2025.

In January 2025, a Staff Engagement Group for the Activism Academy was established. This group will play a key role in involving staff in the academy's work and ensuring it benefits from cross-organisational insight and expertise.

To support the delivery and monitoring of the strategy, Activism Academy governance structures will be in place by quarter four 2025, enabling oversight and accountability.

A trial of Workplace Teams will commence in 2025 to explore new, effective ways

for members to come together, identify issues, and organise at a local level. In quarter four 2025, a review of the representative pathway and continuing learning and development will begin to identify improvements, ensuring reps are supported and empowered to contribute to organising efforts.

Also, by the end of the year, a learning and development programme for all RCN staff will be sourced, designed, and delivered. This programme aims to build internal capacity and ensure that all staff can actively contribute to the shift towards an organising approach.

Together, these deliverables will lay the groundwork for embedding activism throughout the organisation and ensuring sustainable, member-led change.

Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (EDI) Strategy

Implement EDI Strategy to drive forward change, eradicating discrimination and complacency at every level. In 2023, Congress voted that we should be an anti-racist and anti-discriminatory organisation, actively transforming the unequal social and workplace relations that shape our interactions.

Our EDI programme has a clear focus on strengthening anti-racism efforts, building internal capability, and enhancing member support, with a 2025 revenue target of £180,000 from inclusion-related programmes.

By the end of 2025, we will have improved our Customer Relationship Management (CRM) database to enable collection of protected characteristic data, improving the organisation's ability to understand and represent its diverse membership.

A key structural development is the launch of an Anti-Racism Sub-Group in June 2025, which will advise the RCN Group EDI Committee and guide the creation of a Group-wide anti-racism action plan, due by December 2025.

Training is central to 2025 plans:

- A training gap analysis for accredited reps and officers was completed in quarter one. Updated training is being delivered throughout the year, with full rollout to all reps and officers by end of quarter four, ensuring improved knowledge and confidence in addressing EDI issues.
- Anti-discrimination training for officers will be developed by September and rolled out from October.
- The Art of Awkward masterclass on workplace incivility, launched at Congress in May 2025, supports professional inclusivity and contributes to revenue goals.

- An anti-racism sub-group will be launched by Autumn 2025, with the subsequent Anti-racism plan launched in 2026.

By quarter three, we will complete a review of Member Services processes to improve consistency in capturing EDI-related issues. Process updates will begin in quarter four and will be completed by March 2026.

Other key initiatives include:

- a pilot of the Cultural Ambassadors Programme with Birmingham University, running until December
- a new Equality Impact Assessments support tool via Teams, launched in February with staff training underway
- recruitment of an EDI Network Lead by quarter three, to design and launch member-led EDI Networks by the end of 2026.



Goal 3:

The RCN has a sustainable and viable business model for the benefit of staff and members

Our current priorities:

**Strong financial
decision making**

**Our people and
positive culture**

Goal 3: The RCN has a sustainable and commercial business model for the benefit of staff and members

Strong financial decision making

Ensure the responsible stewardship of RCN resources maintaining financial transparency and align pending priorities with strategic goals.

We are targeting a net increase in membership by December 2025.

Growth goals include:

- 2% increase in nurse members
- 5% increase in student members
- 10% increase in nursing support workers (NSWs).

To support this, a wide range of initiatives are underway across systems, finance, and member engagement.

1. Organisational development – The new iTrent (HR/payroll) system will go live at the end of quarter three 2025, D365 (finance) will soft launch towards the end of 2025 with a full rollout planned for 2026. This will

streamline internal processes and improve operational efficiency.

Our Financial Strategy will be presented to Council in November 2025 alongside the 2026 budget. Once approved by Council, the financial strategy will be published on our website in early 2026. Improvements to Finance Business Partnering will continue throughout 2025. The new finance system, once imbedded, will streamline processes, improve user experience and facilitate greater emphasis on financial planning, analysis and insights.

2. Membership growth and retention – To grow market share, we will:
 - identify trusts and universities with low membership
 - launch geo-targeted digital campaigns and regional recruitment drives (quarter three 2025)
 - launch a new member referral scheme quarter three 2025, while a new

payment plan for student nursing associates (SNAs) was launched in early 2025

- in quarter three, begin in-country marketing campaigns for internationally educated nurses (IENs), and recruitment activity in the independent sector will be increased in the second half of 2025.

To support member retention, several engagement initiatives are underway.

- Student webinars, and the RCN Festival in June 2025.
- Expansion of NRN retention activities (quarter two 2025).
- Targeted campaigns, leadership pathways, and educational programme promotions (quarter two 2025).
- Increased value from corporate partnerships (quarter two 2025).

These co-ordinated efforts aim to strengthen both member acquisition and long-term engagement across all membership categories.

Our people and positive culture

To develop a strategic people plan to ensure we can recruit, develop and retain a diverse, talented, high-performing, values-driven workforce, equipped to represent, and be the voice of nursing into the future.

Several major initiatives are underway. The iTrent system is progressing, the majority of functionality launching in July, and case management functionality going live in September. The Culture Conversation project will finalise its project plan and governance by June, with staff conversations concluding in October and draft values and options expected in quarter four 2025.

In the Pay and Benefits Review, recommendations will be completed by July, with a full roadmap and plan developed in quarter three.

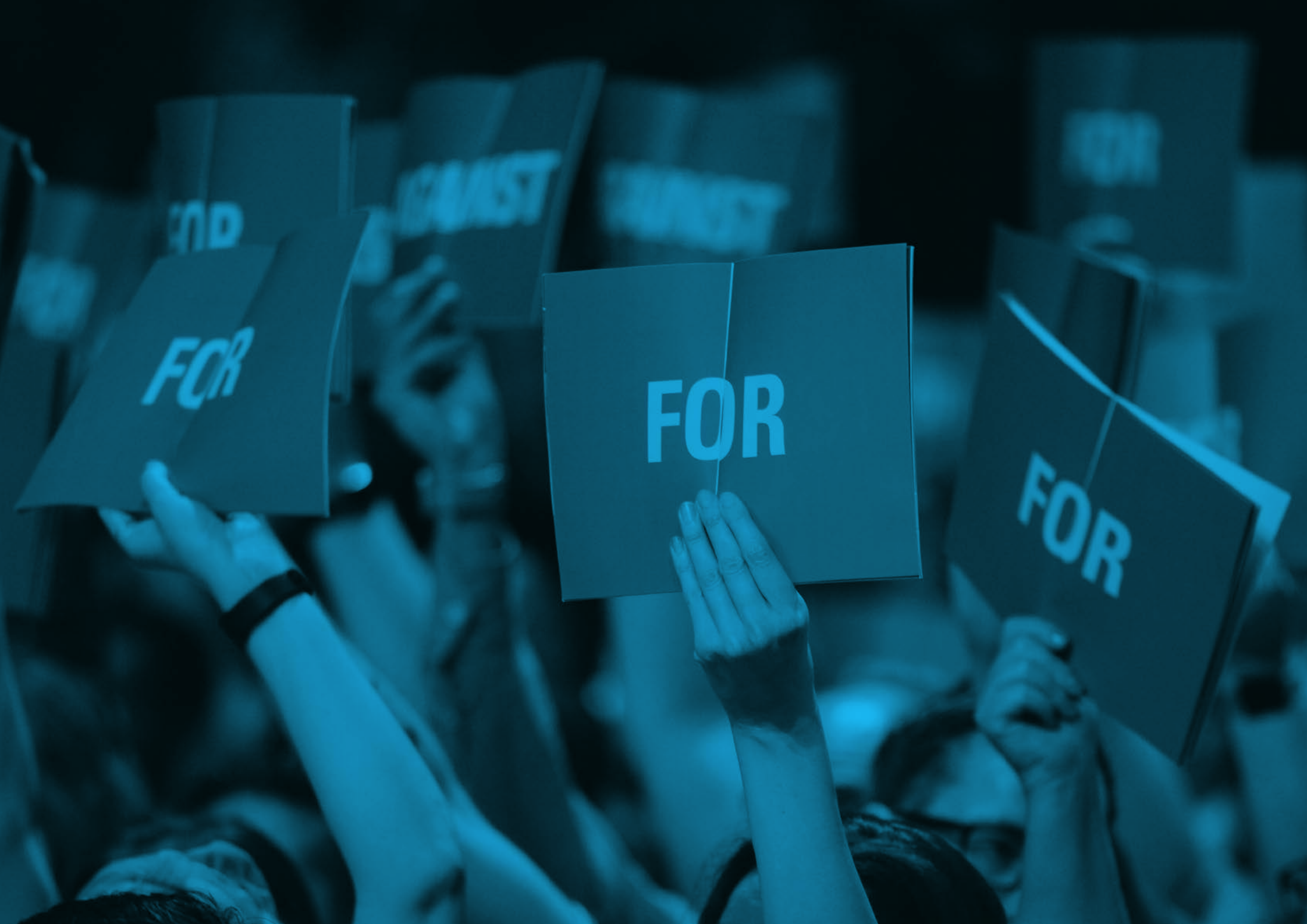
Equity, diversity, and inclusion work includes the revised Respect Policy and

Unacceptable Behaviour Guidelines and new Terms of Reference for staff networks and support groups, all due in quarter three.

A new *Sickness/Absence Strategy* was launched in May 2025, and finally, analysis of recruitment data by protected characteristics is planned for quarter four.

With all the work planned we aim to:

- decrease overall sickness absence
- decrease average number of days lost per employee (on a rolling 12-month basis)
- decrease voluntary turnover rate
- shorten time to hire (from application to offer/acceptance)
- improve mandatory learning completion rate.
- improve reporting of staff equality data (with a focus on disability and race)
- increase our engagement score (measured via surveys rather than quarterly assessments).



Goal 4:

The RCN's governance and positive culture underpin the delivery of the RCN five-year strategic plan

Our current priority:

Effective governance

Goal 4: The RCN's governance and positive culture underpins the delivery of the RCN Five-Year Strategic Plan

Effective governance

This ensures that Council acts as the exemplary governing body for the RCN with its members working in collaboration with the Executive Team to further the long-term success of the RCN, thereby providing safe management of organisational risk and fit-for-purpose, effective decision making.

The Operational Plans reflect the on-going work to enhance member involvement and strengthen governance within the RCN.

55 recommendations arising from the Governance and Culture Review Programme have been delivered. Last year we saw a significant increase in the number of members standing for Council, and in April 2025 we defined

what “member involvement” means, providing a clear, transparent framework that outlines how members can influence decisions, contribute to governance, and shape the profession.

From January 2026, the new RCN Office Holder Eligibility Regulations will come into force, limiting the number of times members can remain on Committees but allowing for greater succession planning and ensuring that a greater number of members are involved in the governance of the RCN. An evaluation plan for Phase 1 of the Governance and Culture Review Programme is underway.

The Governance Operating Framework was published in April, improving transparency and understanding of

committee structures and their functions for members, staff, and the public. Over the last year all role descriptors for those in key governance positions have been reviewed and updated as well as the terms of reference for all our committees.

Capacity-building initiatives are also underway. A new training and development programme for Council was launched in January to enhance the leadership and decision-making capabilities of Council members.

Looking ahead, a broader governance focused training programme is being scoped to be launched in 2026. This aims to develop future leaders, promote accountability, and strengthen succession planning across all governance levels.

