



Royal College
of Nursing

RCN Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care sectors



What are the RCN Employment Standards?



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FAIR PAY
FOR NURSING

SAFE STAFFING
SAVES LIVES

Our Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care Sectors set out what we expect employers in these settings to deliver for the nursing workforce.

They were launched in 2024 and cover 7 key areas (see opposite).

As a rep, you've an important part to play in making sure these standards protect, empower and improve things for the workforce.

How can the Standards be used?

- **Encourage members** to start conversations about their pay and working conditions.
- **Discuss and negotiate** starting terms and conditions or to improve current ones.
- **Use these standards when meeting with MPs** to ensure they are supportive and include references to our positions in parliamentary meetings.

What do the Standards cover?



1. Pay

You deserve to be paid fairly for the work you do. Your pay should reflect the complexity of your role, and the skill, knowledge, and experience you bring to it.

2. Employment contracts

Make sure you have a written contract. It should clearly state your pay, job title, work location, holiday and sick leave entitlements, and your working conditions.



3. Supportive policies

You should be supported in balancing your work and home life. Your employer should have policies that help you manage both effectively.

4. Health, safety and wellbeing

You have the right to work in a safe and healthy environment. Your employer must protect you from risks like violence, lone working, and work-related stress.



5. Working relationships and culture

You should feel respected and supported at work. Positive relationships and a healthy workplace culture are key to your wellbeing and job satisfaction.





6. Learning and development – funding and support

To deliver high-quality care, you need ongoing professional development. Your employer should give you paid time and support to continue learning beyond mandatory training.

7. Supporting internationally educated nursing staff



If you've come from abroad to work in the UK, your employer should help you settle in – offering guidance and signposting to information on housing, cultural adjustment, navigating life in a new country and knowing your rights.

Questions to ask your members

Stewards – do your members:

- have a written contract of employment?
- feel they are paid fairly for the work they do?
- feel supported, respected and fairly treated at work?
- have support in place if they are an internationally educated nurse?

Learning reps – do your members:

- have in-work access to the mandatory training they are expected to take?
- have paid time off to continue training and learning beyond this?

Health and safety reps – are your members protected at work from:

- environments which may damage their health?
- hazards which may injure them?
- conditions which cause work-related stress?
- situations which mean they are working alone?

Find this out by carrying out a workplace inspection. All health and safety reps can do this, even where there is no recognition agreement. Contact your RCN officer to help you give written notice to the employer, and to carry out an inspection.



For more information, visit
rcn.org.uk/Employment-Standards
or scan the QR code.