

# JOIN THE RCN



# The voice of nursing

When you join the RCN, you become part of the UK's largest nursing community and the world's largest nursing trade union and professional body.

Together, we are a strong and powerful voice for change. You can help make the voice of nursing louder.

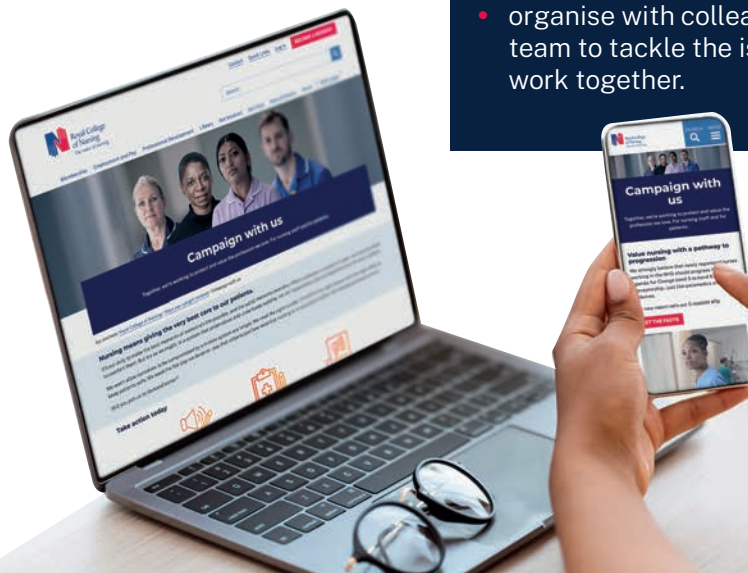
RCN members across the UK are at the forefront of advocating for our profession, working together to campaign on the issues that matter the most to nursing.

## We organise and campaign for nursing to be:

- respected as a safety-critical profession
- safely staffed in law
- valued through fair pay
- supported to thrive through education and at work.

## You can help and make your voice heard:

- join the RCN at [rcn.org.uk/membership](https://rcn.org.uk/membership)
- speak to your colleagues to understand the issues that impact nursing
- contact decision makers and politicians to demand change using our campaign actions
- share our campaigns on social media and with your networks
- respond to surveys, consultations and ballots
- organise with colleagues to work to build a team to tackle the issues you jointly face at work together.



# What does the RCN want for nursing?

**We campaign for nursing to be properly valued and funded.**

We're fighting for a future where nursing is:

## **Respected as a safety-critical profession**

Nursing professionals are the backbone of the health and social care system. We see what society needs. When there is a problem, we must identify it quickly. When there is an emergency, we must react decisively.

For our health and social care system to be what it should be, it's vital nursing is respected for your expertise and experience –and recognised with investment in nursing by those in power.

## **Safe staffed in law**

We need the right number of staff in the right places, with the right skills to keep patients safe. We're responsible for the majority of patient care. We assess what patients need, day in, day out.

And yet, too many of us are forced to care for too many patients at a time. This puts overwhelming pressure on us and risks the safety of our patients.

For our health and social care system to be what it should be, it's vital that those in power enshrine nurse-to-patient ratios in law, so we're always sufficiently staffed and never forced to compromise.



## Valued through fair pay

None of us joined the nursing profession to get rich. But we do deserve fair recognition. That's something we'll never compromise on.

For the health and social care system to be what it should be, it's crucial that those in power value us enough to pay us a sufficient wage. One that rewards our experience and expertise, and allows us to live without money worries. And yet, nursing staff have been repeatedly undersold by successive governments.

The RCN campaigns for fair pay awards and structural change to nursing pay that recognises and respects our profession.

## Supported to thrive through education and in the workplace

It is vital that those in power create the supportive, healthy and inclusive conditions we need to progress in our careers.

Yet nursing education leaves newly registered nurses saddled with debt. Once in the workforce too many of us begin and end our career at the same level. Too many of us are burnt out. Too many of us feel unsupported and excluded. And too many leave nursing all too soon.

That's why we're fighting to see nursing staff supported to thrive through education and in the workplace.

Join us and help strengthen the voice of nursing:

[rcn.org.uk/join](https://rcn.org.uk/join)

0345 772 6100



# Key milestones 1916-2025

RCN members are central to our campaigns, and we have an impressive track record of success in making change happen for the benefit of the profession and patients.

**1916**

RCN incorporated.

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**1919**

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

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**1928**

Royal charter granted by George V.

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**1930**

College of Nursing Education Department established.

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**1962**

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

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**1969**

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

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**1976**

The RCN registers as a trade union.

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**1978**

**Pay not Peanuts** campaign launched.

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**1983-84**

**Nurse Alert** campaign monitored financial and staffing cuts and attracted considerable publicity.

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**1987**

**No Nurses - No Future** was the slogan for a major campaign on addressing staffing shortages.

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**1992**

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

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**2001**

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

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**2009**

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

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## 2012

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

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## 2016

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

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

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## 2017

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

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## 2018

Scotland launches ***Ask for More*** campaign.

The RCN launched the ongoing ***Glove Awareness Campaign***, promoting hand hygiene, infection prevention, healthy glove use, and reducing unnecessary use of the single-most-used plastic items in health care.

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## 2019

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

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

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

**Northern Ireland HSC staff** strike over pay and safe staffing.

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

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## 2020

***Fair Pay For Nursing*** campaign launched.

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

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## 2021

Consultative and indicative ballots conducted on NHS pay in England, Scotland and Wales.

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

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

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

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

## 2022

Historic **four country ballot** for strike action. Strike action begins in England, Northern Ireland and Wales.

## 2023

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

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

RCN campaigns for **GP nursing staff** to receive fair pay award after government fails to fully fund 6% promised pay increase.

## 2024

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

RCN campaigns throughout general election in July 2024 to see all candidates and governments commit to invest in nursing, invest in patients, invest in society.

New government commits to repeal **Anti-strikes Bill**, following RCN campaigning.

## 2025

Two-year pay deal accepted by members in Scotland.

Commitment from UK government to fund **NHS Staff Council structural reform of Agenda for Change**.

Westminster government announce a **graduate guarantee** for nurses and midwives in England thanks to RCN student and NRN campaigning.

HSSIB announce an investigation into temporary care environments after RCN members expose the realities of corridor care in harrowing report.



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

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



# Together, we can make change happen

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

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

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

## Campaign supporters

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

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



Use your voice to demand change for nursing. To get involved please scan the QR code.

- 1** Become a campaign supporter to stay up to date with easy online actions you can take to tackle nursing issues.
- 2** Attend a branch meeting to meet like-minded nursing staff.
- 3** Become an RCN Rep to support colleagues in your workplace.
- 4** Help organise for change locally.
- 5** Visit [rcn.org.uk/campaigns](https://rcn.org.uk/campaigns) to learn more about campaigning with us.
- 6** Join an RCN forum to connect with others in your nursing specialism.

Join us and help strengthen  
the voice of nursing:  
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