



Royal College
of Nursing

Gender Pay Gap report 2025



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Published by the Royal College of Nursing, 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN

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1. Introduction

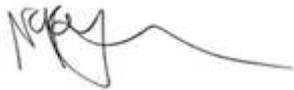
As the world's largest professional body and trade union for nursing staff, the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) is committed to equality of opportunity for our members in their employment and for the people we employ. As we fight for **fair pay for nursing**, we ensure we remunerate our own people fairly too. For that reason, and in fulfilling our commitments to equity, diversity and inclusion, we are continually reviewing our employment policies and approach to ensure they are fair in their design and in practice.

When the data was taken in April 2025 for this report, our workforce was 72% female and 28% male. We remain confident that both are paid equally for doing the same work. Our pay structure rewards length of service, so gender pay gaps within a pay grade are typically attributable to how long people have worked in the organisation.

We recognise that some of our people may not identify as male or female and some people's gender identity does not align with the sex they were assigned at birth. We acknowledge that some people may feel excluded by the language used here and the binary categories reported on. However, we are required by UK legislation to report in a binary way. We await further guidance from the Supreme Court ruling on the definition of sex in the Equality Act 2010.

This report presents the RCN's gender pay gap for the April 2025 snapshot date. Our mean pay gap is 1.9%, and the median pay gap is 2.0%.

I confirm that the data contained within this report is accurate and meets the requirements of the gender pay gap reporting regulations.



Professor Nicola Ranger
General Secretary and Chief Executive

2. Summary

a) The RCN’s gender pay gap

The RCN’s reportable gender pay gap is:

Table 1

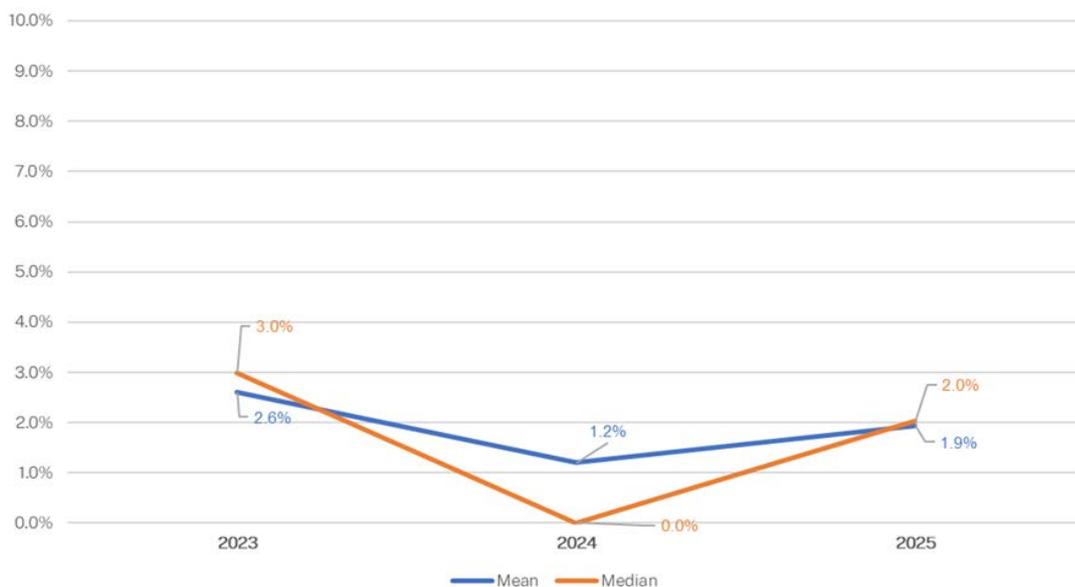
	2025
Mean pay gap	1.9%
Median pay gap	2.0%

The reportable gender pay gap figures for the last 3 years are presented below (Table 2 and Figure 1) for comparison.

Table 2

	2023	2024	2025
Mean pay gap	2.6%	1.2%	1.9%
Median pay gap	3.0%	0.0%	2.0%

Figure 1: Gender pay gap 2023-2025



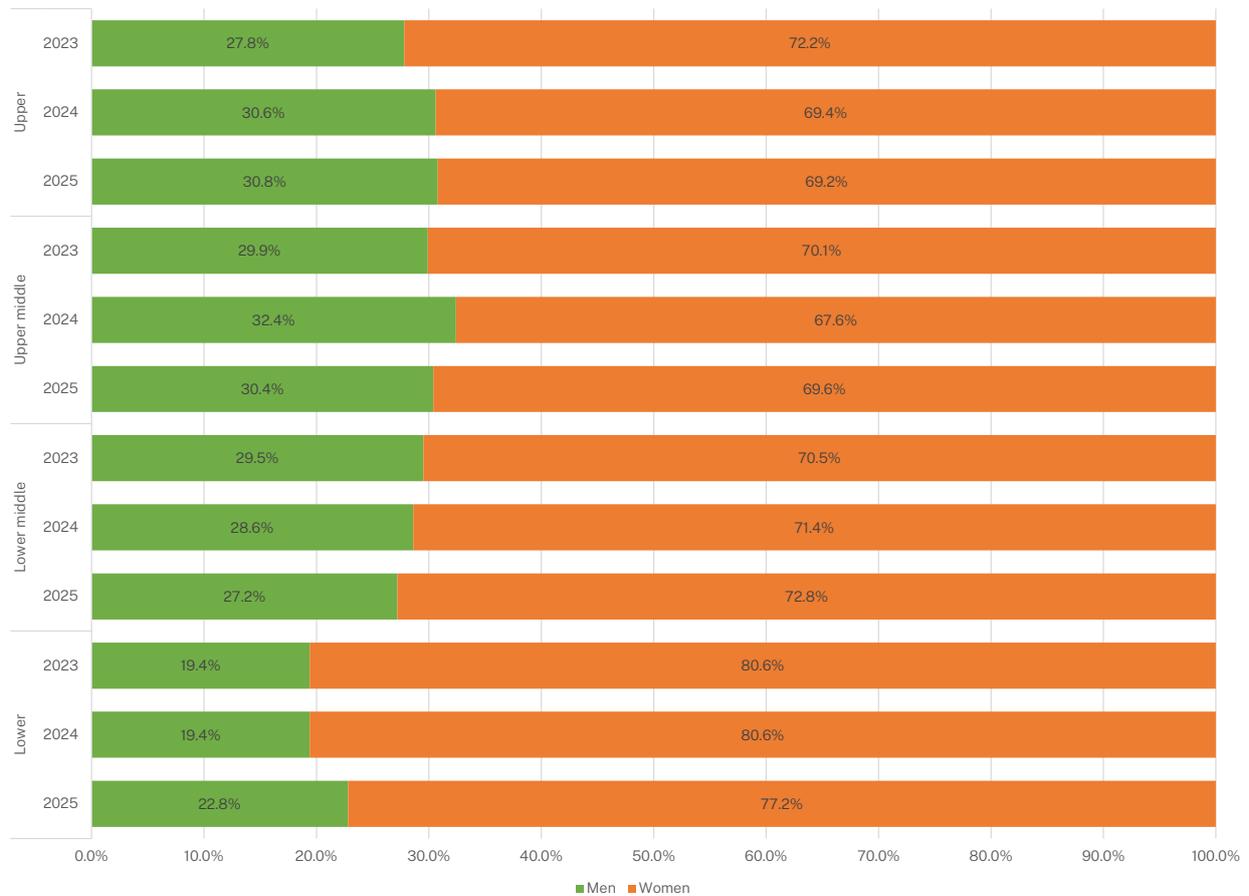
b) Bonuses

Bonuses are not paid as part of the RCN’s reward package, so there are no reportable figures to include as part of this report.

c) Pay quartiles

Figure 2 presents the breakdown of men and women in the RCN’s 4 pay quartiles over the last 3 years.

Figure 2: Quartiles trend (by quartile)



The 2025 data reveals that across all 4 pay quartiles, women make up a majority of staff, reflecting the overall gender composition of the organisation. Women represent 72% of the workforce and hold between 69% and 77% of roles in each quartile.

Women are well represented in the upper pay quartile, where they make up 69% of staff, which is broadly in line with their overall representation. The highest concentration of women is in the lower quartile (77%), indicating that women are more likely to work in lower paid roles. The concentration of women in lower paid roles reflects broader labour market patterns in which women are more likely to work in administrative, co-ordinator and support roles. These roles tend to fall into our lower pay quartiles.

While women remain well represented across all levels of the organisation, this distribution continues to influence the gender pay gap.

The proportion of men is consistently lower across all quartiles, ranging from 23% to 31%, which mirrors the organisation’s overall gender balance.

These patterns suggest that the distribution of women in lower paid roles is a key factor in our gender pay gap results, rather than a lack of representation in higher paid positions. We will continue to review recruitment practices and development pathways to understand whether existing practices are causing barriers.

3. Analysis

The RCN uses a graded pay structure with incremental points and with clear pay progression linked to length of service. All roles are graded using our bespoke job evaluation scheme and each evaluation is carried out by trained assessors from both the organisation and our recognised trade unions. When designing the scheme, we engaged independent experts to ensure that the criteria for job evaluation and grading is fair and unbiased.

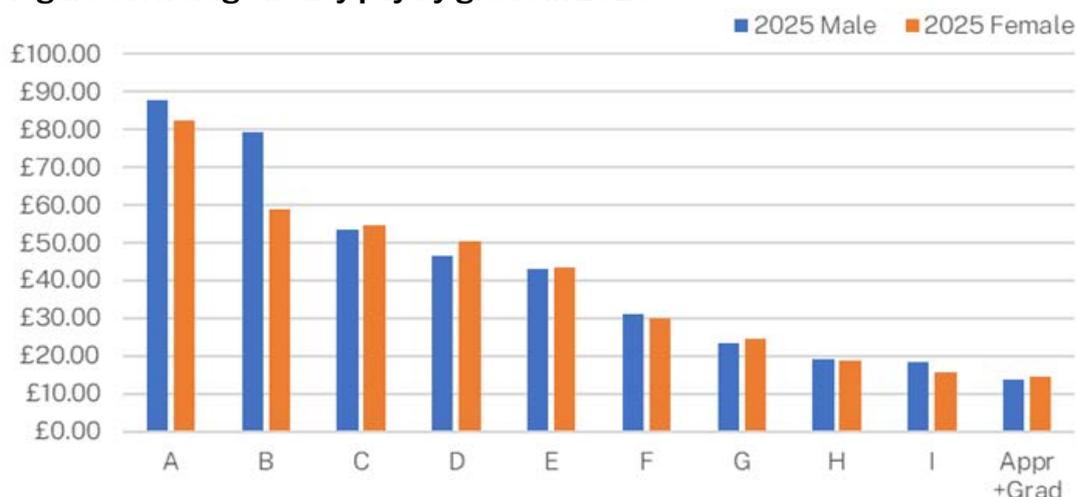
The reportable 2025 data reveals the same pattern, as it has for previous years (see Figure 2). Within grades there will be natural and inevitable differences in the distribution of men and women across the various incremental points. This is because progression through the pay points in the grade is linked to service, so men and women within the same grade will be distributed across the pay points depending on their length of service at the grade.

Table 3

Grade	Average male salary 2025 (per hour)	Average female salary 2025 (per hour)	Gender pay gap 2024	Gender pay gap 2025	Sample size 2025
A	£87.68	£82.36	-4.01%	6%	7
B	£79.22	£58.91	14.25%	34%	10
C	£53.49	£54.45	-4.56%	-2%	25
D	£46.71	£50.46	-0.70%	-7%	52
E	£42.93	£43.25	-1.70%	-1%	210
F	£30.98	£30.04	-0.51%	3%	336
G	£23.20	£24.46	-2.76%	-5%	254
H	£19.12	£18.60	8.15%	3%	178
I	£18.33	£15.57	9.36%	18%	25
Apprentices and graduates	£13.68	£14.46	-5.36%	-5%	6

Figure 3 shows the average hourly pay for men and women in each of our pay grades.

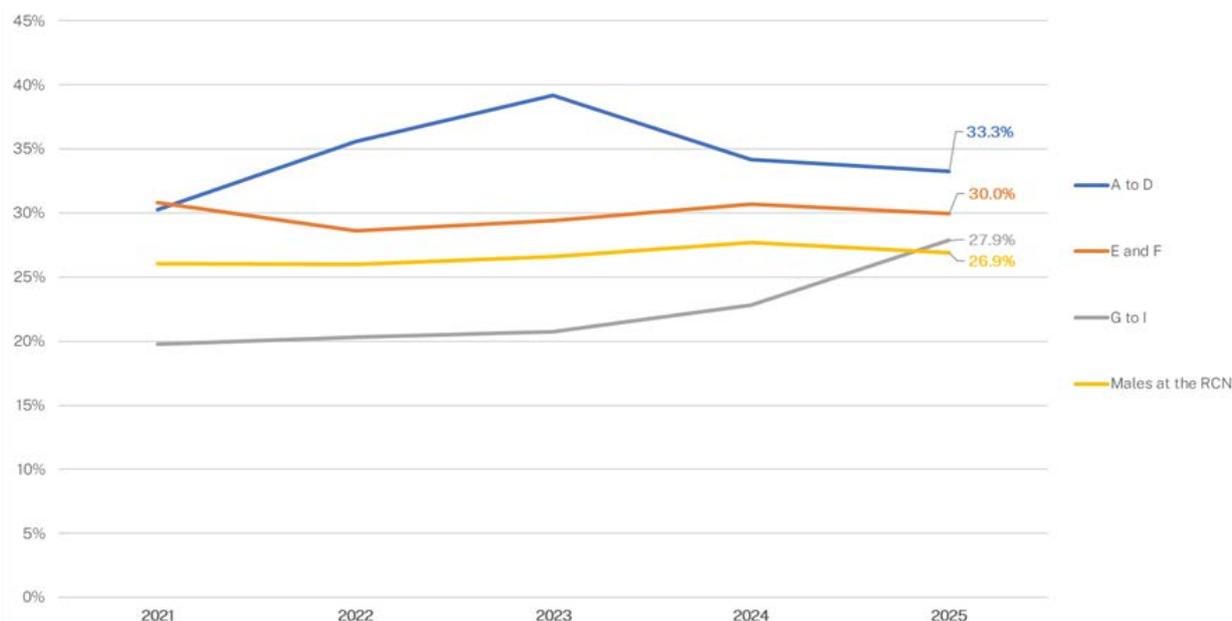
Figure 3: Average hourly pay by grade in 2025



We know that the main driver behind our gender pay gap is not related to the rates of pay for men and women doing similar work; instead, it is caused by disproportionately more males in the most senior roles compared to the least senior roles.

Figure 4 shows the percentage of men in each range of grades since 2021. Male representation is broadly consistent across the organisation, ranging from 33.3% in grades A to D, to 27.9% in grades G to I. The proportion of men in senior grades is closely aligned with the overall organisational figure of 26.9%.

Figure 4: Grade profile of male staff



Currently 70% of our managers are women and, although 27% of all RCN employees are male, at the most senior grades the proportion of male employees has historically been much higher. 32% of A to D grades were male in 2025.

The progress that has been made in addressing our gender pay gap since 2010 is primarily attributable to improvements in our diversity profile at more senior grades.

Action undertaken to address disparity

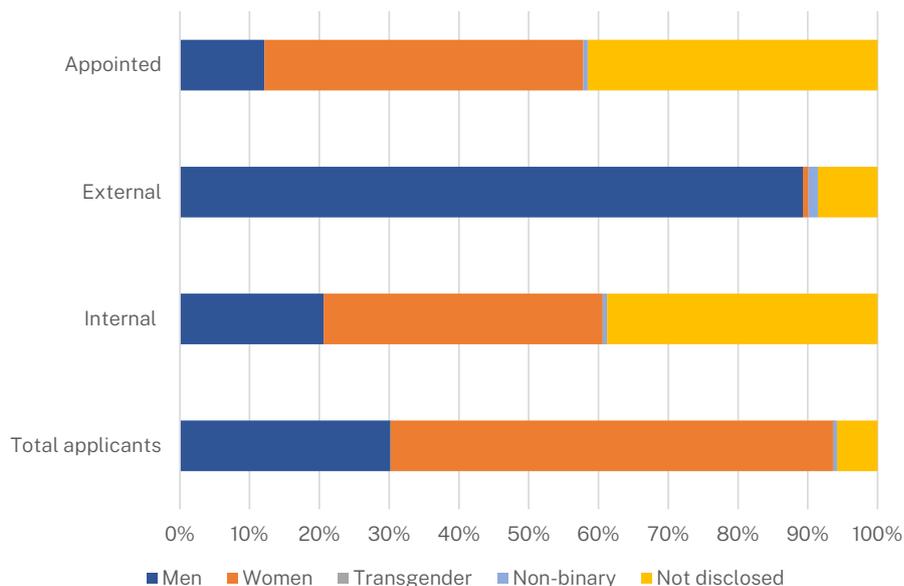
1. Developed our evidence base

We continue to routinely report on:

- the numbers of men and women, and proportion of men and women who apply for jobs and are appointed
- the numbers of men and women who apply externally compared to internally.

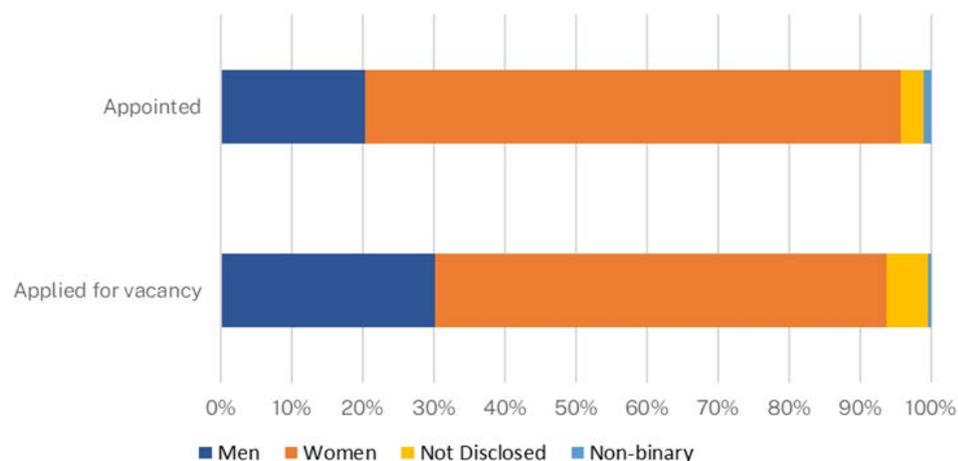
In 2025, 30% of our job applicants were men, but the proportion of appointments was 12% men and 46% women, broadly consistent with our overall workforce profile. The picture is similar for both internal and external job applicants (Figure 5).

Figure 5: Percentage of applicants by gender identity in 2025



We are also committed to measuring the internal movement of men and women who apply for posts and are successful (Figure 6). In 2025, 30% of employees who applied for vacancies were men. The proportion of those appointed who were men was 20%, which is consistent with our overall workforce profile.

Figure 6: Percentage of internal staff applying for and appointed to posts in 2025 by gender identity



We are committed to continuing to measure the following metrics.

- **The proportion of women and men who return to work after maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave to resume their original jobs.**

In the 12 months following the April 2025 snapshot, 83% of our employees who have taken maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave have returned to their original jobs.

- **The proportion of women and men still in post a year after returning to work from maternity, paternity, adoption or shared parental leave.**

In 2025, the data on those employees is as follows:

Table 4

Leave type	Number of employees	Still in post one year after return	Notes
Maternity	12	100%	75% have returned to their original roles. The remainder remains on maternity leave.
Paternity	5	100%	All remained in their original roles.
Adoption	0	-	
Shared parental leave	1	100%	Remained in their original role.

- The proportion of women who work flexibly compared to men, and at what level such arrangements are found.

The proportion of men and women who work flexibly is shown in Table 5.

Table 5

	Men	Women	All staff
Working flexibly	70%	73%	73%

Across the organisation, the pattern of take-up of flexible working options is reasonably consistent for both men and women (Figures 7a and 7b).

Figure 7a: Percentage of men working flexibly

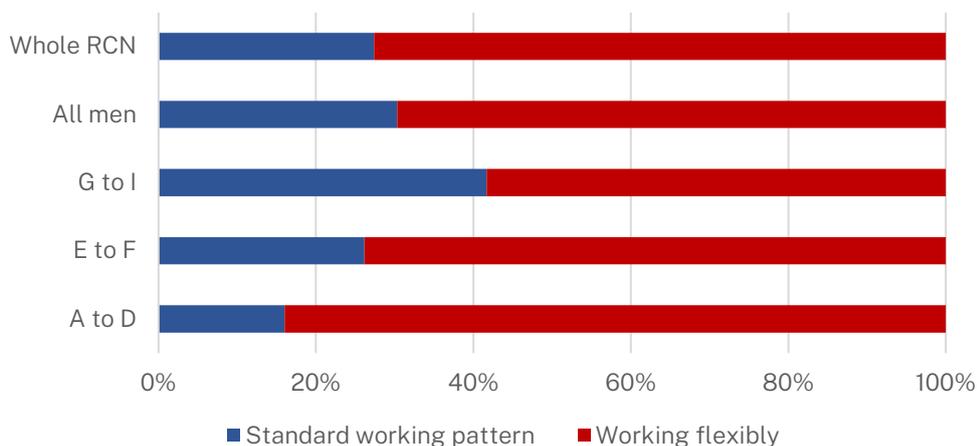
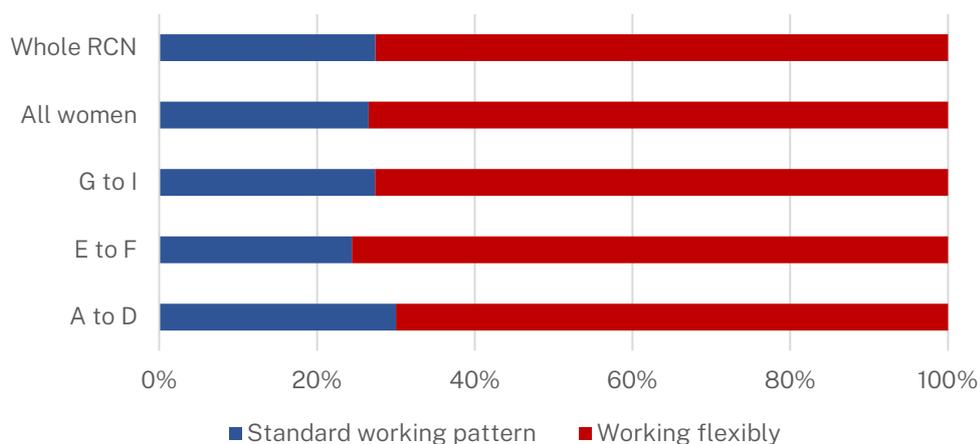


Figure 7b: Percentage of women working flexibly

We will continue to monitor flexible working by gender.

2. Ensured related policies and practices are up to date

We operate a structured policy review schedule and work in close partnership with our recognised trade unions when reviewing our people policies and procedures.

We also consult our staff networks (Access and Inclusion, LGBTQ+, Neurodivergent, Race and Culture, Women's and Working Families) and involve our staff support groups (Cancer Support and Working Carers Support) when making policy changes.

All new or updated policies go through a full equality impact assessment to help ensure no protected groups are disproportionately affected.

We ensure that all policy changes are clearly and comprehensively communicated.

3. Trained and supported line managers

We provide recruitment and selection training to ensure fair, non discriminatory and consistent processes are followed. This includes undertaking an unconscious bias online learning module.

We also provide support to managers when policies change to ensure they are implemented fairly, consistently and effectively.

Managers, like all staff, are required to complete regular online learning in equality, diversity and inclusion. This is supplemented by broader workshops exploring the theme in more depth, along with more targeted learning opportunities - for example, sessions on menopause, pregnancy and parenting at work.

4. Supported working families

We offer family friendly support that encourages all employees to make use of these provisions. We have equalised our occupational shared parental pay with our occupational maternity pay, and provide transitional support to help staff prepare for, and return from, long term family leave.

We actively support our Working Families Network and Working Carers Support Group, and provide education to all staff around the challenges, and potential solutions, that working parents and carers face. Our Working Families Network holds monthly meetings, providing staff with a safe space to share experiences, seek peer support, and discuss issues relevant to a range of family situations - including single parenting, supporting children with additional needs, and navigating different stages of a child's life.

5. Made the most of flexible working and supported hybrid working

We actively empower our people to do their best work, to be able to balance the demands of work and home. We are a diverse organisation and understand everyone has different needs and many of our employees enjoy flexible working, enabling them to deliver results whilst having a good work-life balance.

Our job advertisements highlight our commitment to flexible and hybrid working, inviting applicants to speak to the recruiting manager to find out more.

Hybrid working is an important and highly valued part of our employee experience and employer value proposition.

6. Encouraged career and talent development

We hold learning and development events through webinars and/or locally across our offices to support our people with childcare and other caring arrangements to be able to take part.

Where possible, we avoid long development events that can create problems for part-time staff, and people with childcare and other caring responsibilities. We also plan in person learning activities to help reduce the need for our people to travel at weekends.

We welcome job sharing proposals from employees and offer flexibility in working hours, patterns, and locations wherever the role allows.

All job descriptions, person specifications and recruitment adverts are gender neutral. Our recruitment and selection process uses anonymous shortlisting. Shortlisters do not see job applicants' names or other identifying information to reduce the impact of conscious or unconscious bias influencing a hiring manager's decision about whether to progress an application.

We use panel interviews and multiple assessments to support robust, objective, criteria-based decision-making, and we apply a competency-based model that supports improved career development pathways for our people.

7. Minimised negative impact from pay systems

We're committed to fair pay, which is why we use a single transparent pay system and evaluate each role objectively. Our job evaluation criteria have been independently assessed to ensure they are free from bias.

We ensure that our people have clear channels to communicate any suggestions or concerns, including our anonymous "pulse check" surveys, which include questions about reward.

For difficult-to-fill vacancies, we provide a robust business-case approach to requests for a starting salary above the bottom of the grade. A recruitment premium allows for an additional payment on top of the standard salary and allowances where market pressures would otherwise prevent the RCN from being able to recruit and retain staff.

We periodically review all aspects of pay to ensure that all parts of our organisation are operating fairly and consistently.

8. Supporting women in our workforce

Since 2024, we have had a menopause policy in place that was developed with staff and in consultation with representatives from our recognised trade unions. The policy aims to support colleagues throughout their menopause transition and to raise awareness of its impact. Given the profile of our workforce, this is an important area for the RCN and is supplemented by learning opportunities for all staff, including a dedicated session for our line managers.

Menopause support is also available through the Unum Help@hand service, where employees can call and request a menopause specialism specific GP.

The People and Organisational Development team provide menopause awareness workshops for all staff and tailored training for managers. In partnership with our Women's Network, we have established regular menopause cafés to provide our people with an accessible, respectful, and confidential space to discuss menopause.

Our Women's Network continues to provide a supportive space for colleagues to connect, share experiences and access peer support. The network is consulted on new and revised people policies and hosts regular organisation-wide events to raise awareness and educate others on relevant issues.

9. RCN Group Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Statement

Our [Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Statement](#) focuses on our ambition to be a world-class champion of equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights, and sets out how we aim to achieve this as an employer.

4. What more will we do?

We recognise our gender pay gap has increased slightly this year. However, given turnover and internal movement, it is inevitable that it will move again over time.

We recognise that change takes time, and so we will allow more time for the measures taken in recent years to have greater effect.

The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes
excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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

012 465 | April 2026



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