



Royal College
of Nursing



Impact Report 2025

Delivering support. Driving progress. Making change.





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1. Introduction and overview

This report fills me with an immense sense of pride. And I hope it does the same to every RCN member who reads it.

Reflecting the scale, diversity and richness of our profession, the RCN means different things to different people. We are a large, complex, multi-faceted organisation which works across the entirety of nursing practice. We support members facing difficulties at work, with immigration, those facing hardship and those struggling to cope. We work in every corner of the UK, in the Channel Islands, the Isle of Man and, increasingly, our influence is felt overseas.

Very few members ever see ‘the whole picture’ – and nor do they need to. The RCN needs to be there, ready to respond to the individual needs of our members. For these members, the RCN is not abstract – it is immediate, personal, and essential.

These pages show the collective power we can bring when we act together. Whether through our campaigning and influencing work, our engagement with governments and decision-makers, or the strength of our public voice, we continue to ensure that nursing is heard, respected and understood.

At a time of unprecedented pressure on health and care services, our voice has never been more important – and we have never been more effective.

This report highlights the extraordinary work driven by members themselves. Across our forums, branches and activist networks, colleagues are shaping the future of the profession – championing improvements in practice, driving forward inclusion and equity, and ensuring that the RCN remains rooted in the real experiences of those it represents.

These are not isolated successes; they are the foundation of a stronger, more connected membership.

Our Institute, too, is beginning to transform how we lead and influence. By bringing together research, insight and expertise, it is helping to define what modern nursing leadership looks like – providing the evidence and authority needed to shape policy, practice and public understanding. This is essential work, not just for today, but for the long-term future of the profession.



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Importantly, this report is not simply a record of what has been achieved. It is a statement of what is possible when we harness our collective strength. It shows that, despite the scale and complexity of the challenges we face, we continue to adapt, to innovate, and to deliver for our members.

There is, of course, more to do. There always will be. But these pages make clear that the RCN is evolving – becoming more responsive, more representative and more impactful as we enter our 110th year.

Above all, this report is about people. It is about our members, their experiences, and their commitment to delivering outstanding care every day. And it is about the role we play together, in supporting them to do just that.

I hope that as you read on, you see not only the breadth of what we do, but the difference it makes – and feel, as I do, a renewed sense of pride in everything the RCN stands for.

Rarely do we get the opportunity to pause and reflect on the impact that we can make together. This report gives us an opportunity to do just that.

What is impact?

In 2023, we published our five-year strategic plan *A New Dawn For Nursing*. It set out our aims and ambitions against four goals.

1. The RCN as the Voice of Nursing.
2. The RCN has an engaged, thriving and diverse membership.
3. The RCN has a sustainable and viable business model.
4. The RCN's governance and positive culture underpin the delivery of the RCN five-year strategic plan.

Within these goals we also identified 10 priority areas.

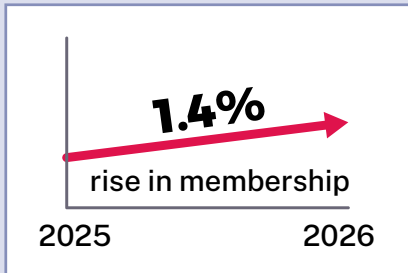
1. A pay strategy for the NHS, independent and social care sectors (band progression and general practice nurse representation).
2. Staffing for safe and effective care (ratios).
3. The RCN Institute of Nursing Excellence.
4. Nurse education (including funding support for nursing students).
5. Member activism (organising) and experience of services.
6. Equality, diversity and inclusion strategy for members.
7. Strong financial decision making (including growing the membership and exploring new sectors).
8. Corridor care.
9. Effective governance.
10. Our people and positive culture.

Our impact is all the activity and success we have had in progressing our goals and working in our priority areas. This report is a summary of what we have achieved in 2025 and includes links to help you explore areas of particular interest further.



Read more:

Search “**five year plan**” on the RCN website.



Over **½ million** membership

Largest membership ever!

Over **32,395** mentions across UK media online, and in print, on TV and on the radio

Top 5 publishers of RCN news:
 The Independent **224**
 The Daily Mail **183**
 BBC News **147**
 Daily Mirror **94**
 The Guardian **65**

1,759 Reps

1,088	477	387
Stewards	Learning reps	Health and safety reps

Positive recommendation from a colleague

60% of members gave this as the main reason to join

Nursing Support Workers

5% Largest growth area

13,600 New RCN students from
162 university fairs

211,263 Forum members **UP** by nearly **10%**

39% of new members

Internationally Educated Nurses (IENs)

Employment advice:



80,667
calls



1,000
live chats



35,897
emails

Member support services:



7,109
Counselling
service
sessions



714
New cases
opened by
immigration
services

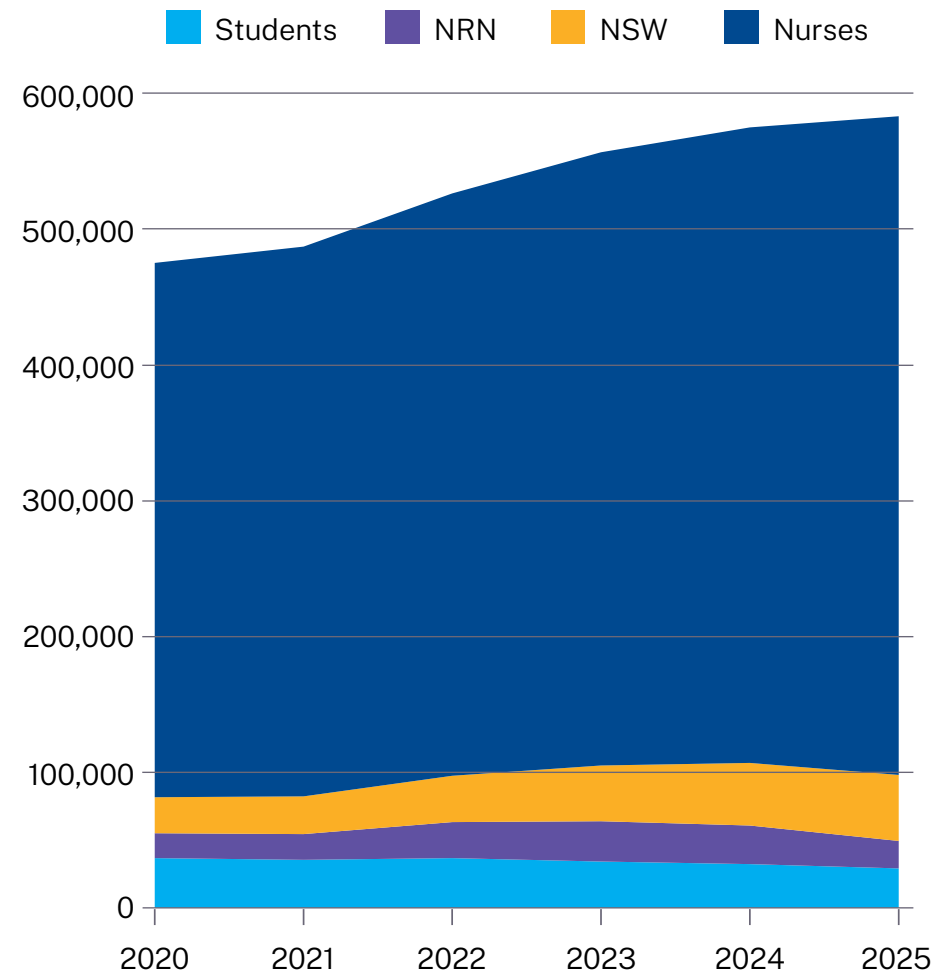


658
Careers
service
sessions



329
New cases
opened by
welfare
services

Membership growth over the past five years



2. Membership and workforce

Membership

Our members are at the heart of everything we do. They drive forward our activism, lead our professional practice and provide vital insight into nursing. Continuing to strengthen our numbers and the depth of engagement we have with our members, means we are able to speak authentically for the profession and properly represent the diversity of the workforce. This is essential to achieving our goals and priorities.

2025 saw continued membership growth and deeper engagement, with progress on supporting nurses on the bank, strengthening the role of reps, and addressing challenges in the independent sector.

Member experience

The launch of Place in Queue, auto callback and our WhatsApp channel as part of phase three of our contact centre transformation project improved our accessibility for members.

The Member Experience Journey (MEJ) Hub was also launched in 2025 as the RCN's home of resources to support staff working with members. It will support colleagues working in countries and regions to provide high-quality enquiry and case management by bringing learning, guidance, expert insights, practical tools and wellbeing resources together in one place.

Empowering activism

Activism strategy

The *RCN Activism Strategy* was developed by the Activism Academy to drive a transformation in the breadth and depth of RCN member activism. RCN members and staff were involved in the development of the strategy, with opportunities such as activism surveys, focus groups and member Q&A sessions used to gather insights and shape the strategy content.

Supporting our reps

The work of reps is integral to our organisation and cannot be separated from the overall impact demonstrated throughout this report. Their expertise, influence and support can be seen in everything from our campaigning and lobbying to helping individuals in the workplace. That's why we're committed to supporting them to continue making an impact. Here are just 10 of our actions from 2025:

1 Launch of activism app

We launched a new app to enhance communication between RCN active members. The initial trial has seen hundreds of new RCN accredited reps use the app to share wins, seek support and build community. The app has also been used to support job evaluation activities in Scotland, and the UK-wide Workplace Teams pilot (see below).

2 Workplace Teams pilot

We launched a programme of tailored support for reps at 25 employers across the UK. Providing a tailored learning package, bespoke expert coaching and support, and resources to create sustainable workplace structures that increase RCN visibility and participation, feedback from participants has so far been encouraging and the pilot is set to continue through 2026.

3 Reps portal

The rebuilt reps portal was launched in September 2025 making recording casework simpler and more efficient. 2025 saw a 20% increase in the number of cases opened by stewards reaching 5,100 and supporting 5,600 members. During 2025, 416 new stewards trained to use the case management system.

4 Case management phone app trial

The PowerApps phone app was launched in phases throughout the year proving a popular and easy alternative to desktop access and allowing case work recording across workplaces. It's now standard for RCN issued mobile phones and reps are also utilising the option of using this on their own devices

5 UK Joint Reps Conferences

Two UK Joint Reps Conferences provided learning, development and inspirational speakers for over 400 reps and elected RCN leaders.

6 ICB and CSU Reps Pathway

Reps were able to react effectively to emerging issues faced by members in NHS England using a bespoke ICB and CSU Reps Pathway we created.

7 Trade Union Committee reps project

This Trade Union Committee-commissioned and overseen project aims to review and improve the influence and reach and RCN Reps. In 2025, we reviewed the role descriptors of all reps. In 2026, we will review our approach to facilities time, support and supervision and how we recruit, accredit and disaccredit RCN Reps.

8 Accredited training (H&S)

We've designed an accredited training programme for health and safety reps which mirrors training offered by other unions. It's now approved by the London Open College Network and the first course will run in spring 2026.

9 Non-accredited training (H&S)

We've also designed a series of workshops to provide further information and support to health and safety reps. The first of these workshops was delivered in December 2025 and focused on inspections. A range of workshops covering the control of substances hazardous to health and the Workplace (Health Safety and Welfare) Regulations are scheduled to take place in early 2026.

10 Continuing learning and development

Targeted online and in-person continuing learning and development sessions expanded our ongoing learning offer.



Read more:

Search "**become an RCN rep**" on the RCN website.

Growing our forums

RCN forums, influence practice, champion innovation and shape change across all areas of the profession. They are an unrivalled knowledge bank that provides the expertise needed not just to shape clinical practice, but to evidence change needed to improve our workplaces. Over the past 12 months the RCN UK professional forums have collectively demonstrated sustained growth, marked by substantial achievements.

1 Expanding influence and visibility

Forums embraced digital communication and expanded social media platforms to reach more members. The District Nurse and Community Nursing Forum achieved more than 100,000 digital impressions during the ‘Spotlight on Community Nursing’ week, while the History of Nursing Forum saw 24million views in a single month during the ‘Nurses in Red’ Wikipedia project.

2 Strengthening our knowledge and practice

A wide range of new and updated professional resources supported standardised practice, enhanced clinical competence and championed evidenced-based care across specialities. Publications included the fourth edition of *the Competency Framework for Nurses Caring for People with Liver Disease including Liver Transplantation, Advanced Level Practice for Ophthalmic Nursing* and *Pregnancy Loss Guidance for Nursing*.

3 Knowledge and innovation exchange

Events and learning opportunities were delivered through a comprehensive programme of conferences, webinars, and workshops. The RCN International Nursing Research Conference hosted more than 450 participants and a Digital Nursing Forum conference, in collaboration with the British Computer Society showcased digital nursing innovations across research, education and practice.

4 Collaborative power

The RCN Acute Care Symposium 2025 saw the Critical Care & Flight Nurses and the Urgent & Emergency Care Forums join forces, increasing the event’s reach and impact. A cross-specialty project by the Nursing in Justice & Forensic and History of Nursing Forums, saw the Prison Nursing Unlocked exhibition, launched by Stephen Fry and Sobanan Narenthiran.

5 Expert professional input

Forums played a pivotal role in influencing policy and shaping national health strategies – including contributing to the long-term strategic direction for the profession as part of the *NHS Ten Year Health Plan*. Highlighting priorities and challenges for nurses, forum members have participated in consultations and guideline development, engaged with parliamentary groups, and represented nursing perspectives at high-level meetings with government bodies and professional organisations.

6 Making Congress count

Forums were highly visible at Congress, getting involved in ways that had not previously been explored. As well as contributing directly to the wide-ranging debates, they collaborated on numerous education, learning and development programmes. Engagement with delegates at the forum stand resulted in more membership growth.

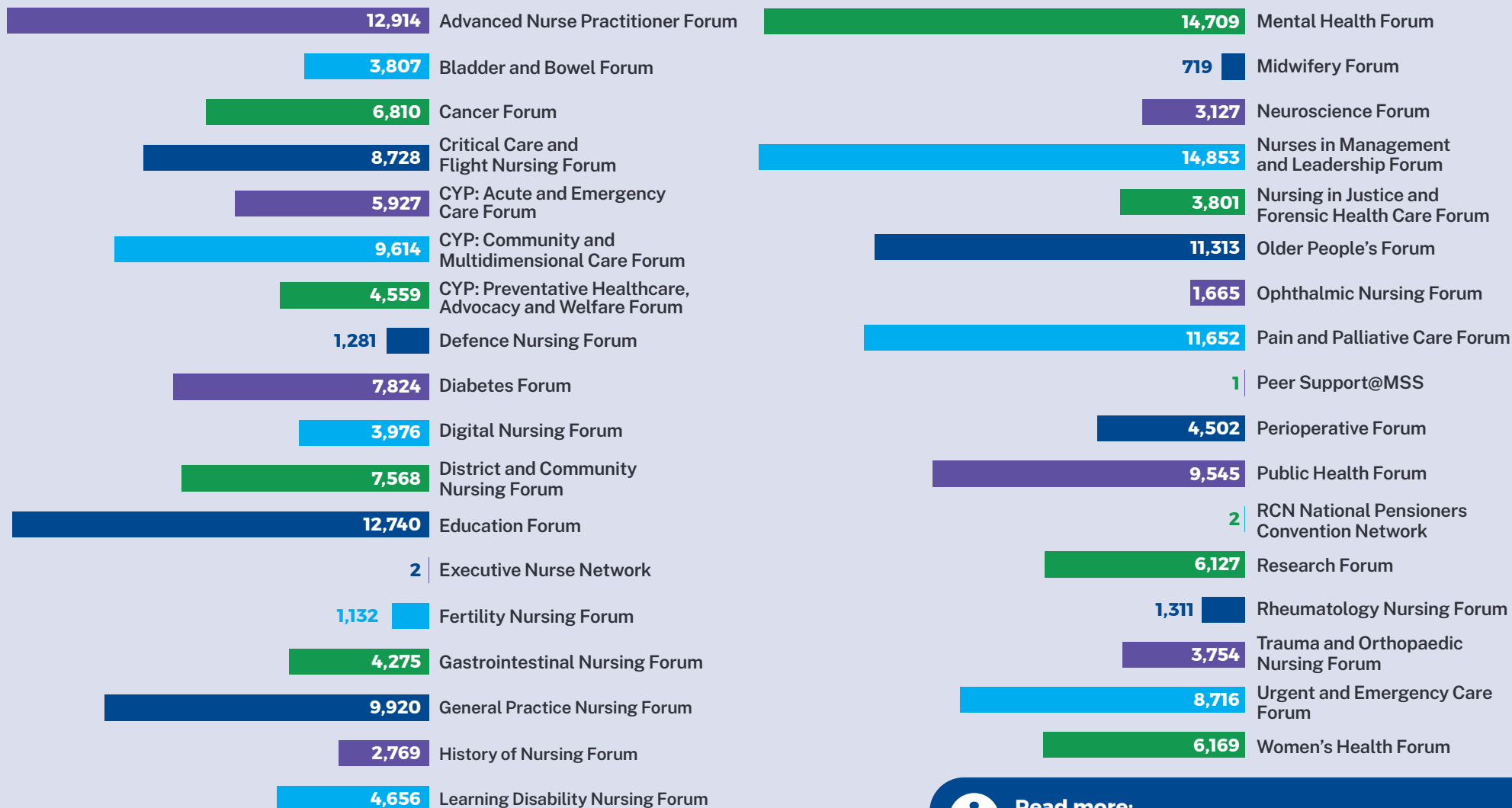
7 Improved impact

The significant work to implement the recommendations of the Forums and Networks Review was signed off as completed by the Professional Nursing Committee and a report outlining the achievements and positive impact the changes are having was published.

8 Skills for activism

We ran a joint workshop with the Activism Academy, equipping forum chairs with professional activism skills receiving overwhelmingly positive feedback.

Membership of RCN forums in 2025 - total: 210,468



Read more:
Search "forums and networks" on the RCN website.

Workforce

Nursing Workforce Standards

This year, we launched our newly revised *Nursing Workforce Standards*. Originally published in 2021, the standards were the first national blueprint for addressing nursing shortages across the UK and set the standard for excellent patient care and nursing support in all settings.

System change for NHS England

In March 2025, Prime Minister Sir Keir Starmer announced major reforms to NHS system organisations in England. Under these proposals, NHS England would be absorbed into the Department of Health & Social Care, resulting in up to 50% staffing reductions across both organisations. Commissioning Support Units would close, and government departments were instructed to review their use of arm's length bodies. At the same time, integrated care boards (ICBs) were told to reduce their running costs by 50% by October 2025.

Following our lobbying, the RCN was publicly recognised by Secretary of State for Health and Social Care, Wes Streeting, as a key stakeholder engaged in the *NHS Ten Year Health Plan*, in particular on issues around staffing and corridor care. This sustained engagement positioned the RCN as a leading voice in the national debate about system reform, providing reassurance to members that their professional and employment interests remain central as the health system was fundamentally transformed.

General Secretary & Chief Executive Nicola Ranger and President Bejoy Sebastian led a delegation of RCN members to share expertise and personal experiences with the Health Secretary, Chief Nursing Officer Duncan Burton and Workforce Minister Karin Smyth ahead of publication of the plan. We also gave evidence to the Parliamentary Health and



Social Care Committee, highlighting the RCN's concerns with the reorganisation including the nursing posts under threat and the lack of a fully funded workforce plan.

Our policy report describing the nursing's key roles within NHS England and ICBs asked roles to be protected in restructures and we brought together stakeholders from other unions and Royal Colleges to discuss the implementation of the *NHS Ten Year Health Plan*, and (to be published) workforce plan in light of the announced changes to NHS England and ICBs.

Following the publication of the government's Model ICB Blueprint in May 2025 – which removed the requirement for a statutory Chief Nursing Officer – RCN England Director, Patricia Marquis wrote to

NHS England CEO Sir James Mackey to emphasise the essential role of nursing leadership in delivering safe, effective care. Her intervention, supported by the RCN report *Nursing at the Helm*, ensured that several ICBs retained an executive nurse role. Where this has not been achieved, the RCN continues to work to ensure the nursing voice remains central to local health commissioning.

Though the changes have not been prevented, members and local representatives have highlighted the value of the programme of webinars, new online resources, regular input from the RCN's national and England regional teams and awareness raising in the media.

Independent health and social care sector (IHSC)

We constantly strive to strengthen the RCN's influence and impact across the IHSC sector. Our focus is on enhancing employment practices, elevating member voice, and securing greater representation for the independent workforce in UK wide decision making forums. This work crosses multiple employers, with vastly differing terms and conditions of employment from general practice nursing to arm's length bodies, the civil service, social care, private hospitals, hospices and charities.

Adult Social Care Fair Pay Agreement development

In 2025, the Employment Rights Act came into force, providing for an Adult Social Care Negotiating Body (ASCNB) to negotiate legally binding, sector-wide, Fair Pay Agreements (FPAs) which also cover employment conditions.

A public consultation was launched on the design of the ASCNB and a £500m package to support the first FPA was announced.

We have worked with the UK government and the Department of Health and Social Care (DHSC) on establishing a working group led by the DHSC to bring together key stakeholders and interested parties.

We now have a formal role in the group, and related task and finish groups, which allows us to influence discussions with key government ministers, department officials, employer representative organisations and other trade unions. We will also provide a formal response to the consultation which ended in January 2026.

The first FPA is intended for implementation in 2028–29.

A voice for the sector

IHSC leads in England all have a seat on their regional Social Care Nursing Advisory Committee (SCNAC). These relatively new bodies (supported by DHSS and Skills for Care) have enabled the RCN to have a voice on a forum which aims to elevate the status of social care nursing and ensures its crucial role is recognised.

There are seven SCNACs across England and, in their roles, our leads are able to ensure that the voice of independent sector nursing is heard and valued within the local health economy. Through these forums they have challenged delegated health care tasks and introduced the RCN Workforce Standards.

IHSC Employment Standards

Following the successful launch of the RCN *Employment Standards for Independent Health and Social Care Sectors* in 2024, we created new resources to promote use in 2025. Videos, social media, posters and crib sheets for reps resulted in online engagement including 12,161 video views, 804 social media engagements and more than 51,000 impressions.



Read more:
Search “**independent health and social care sector employment**” on the RCN website.

Students and nurse education

In March, we published *Fixing the Leaking Pipeline*, a report which exposed the issues facing nursing students and the solutions to support them. It included analysis from London Economics which found that student loan forgiveness for nurses working in the NHS would actually increase retention by around 10 years. The report drew on commissioned research, economic analysis as well as member research.

The Students Committee submitted a Congress resolution for the RCN to call on governments across the UK to increase financial support for nursing students. The resolution was passed, and we launched a petition during Congress which gained around 8,000 signatures. The petition was delivered to HM Treasury and the Department of Education ahead of the UK government's budget in November.

Throughout 2025 we have seen cuts to nursing programme budgets at universities, as well as closures of entire programmes. In Wales, we campaigned to stop the closure of the nursing school at Cardiff University. This activity, in support of strong action from both students and faculty staff, led to plans to close the school to be reversed.

The University of Nottingham had similarly announced that it will close its child and mental health nursing programme in the coming years. The RCN is lobbying educators, governments and regulators to improve the standards and accessibility of nursing education.

We also undertook a survey of final year students to investigate reports of newly registered nurses being unable to find employment. What we found prompted us to write to Health Secretary Wes Streeting and Chief Nursing Officer Duncan Burton urging action. A roundtable for RCN Students saw members meet with Duncan Burton and members of the Department for Health and Social Care to raise the issue directly to decision makers.

In October 2025, there were no adult nursing band 5 vacancies within Swansea Bay University Health Board, creating significant anxiety among students and staff. Students who were funded via the commissioning model were especially concerned as their funding is tied to a two-year commitment to working in Wales post qualification. Rapid escalation by RCN Wales to senior leaders within the health board, commissioners and the CNO ensured immediate attention to the issue. Meetings with students and senior leaders resulted in additional posts being released as part of the streamlining process, moving from zero vacancies to sufficient job availability for all affected students.

In England, we also began to ramp up our campaigning on jobs for newly qualified nurses, working closely with student members. In August, our campaigning resulted in the DHSC announcing a 'graduate guarantee' in England.



Read more:
Search "**RCN students**" on the RCN website.

Developing leaders

We are committed to empowering nursing professionals at every stage of their careers, providing world-class leadership development opportunities grounded in the values of compassion, integrity, and evidence-based practice. This year's highlights include:

- an updated suite of development programmes for nursing professionals setting out on their leadership journey and support for others at different stages of their careers
- delivering 'Preparing Evidence and Writing Statements' at Blackpool Teaching Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust. The programme resulted in a 67% increase in confidence in statement writing and a 72% increase in confidence when giving verbal evidence
- two leadership summits for chief nursing officers and deputies discussed the greatest challenges facing our senior and executive nurse leaders
- a network with senior executive nurses from the USA has been established as part of our exploration of global partnerships and international consultancy. We are developing opportunities to support leadership development in Ghana, Myanmar and Saudi Arabia
- we've created NEST, an interactive online community of practice that showcases our work and creates opportunities for networking, debate and discussion. It offers easy access to event bookings, news and the latest information from each of our academies
- 12 staff can now deliver the RCN 'Mentor Me' programme, offering early career nurses mentorship through a national programme. The programme will launch in 2026.



Read more:
Search "**leadership academy**" on the RCN website.

Developing practice

Supporting nursing staff with the clinical skills and knowledge they need to deliver exceptional patient care with confidence is essential to how we support the profession. We develop evidence-based guidance, standards and learning programmes; collaborate with and provide expertise and recommendations to other organisations and promote a culture of continual learning and development among nursing staff. Highlights in 2025 include:

- psychosocial Interventions (PSI) Programme: This course was co-designed with service users and experts to enhance mental health nursing skills
- clinical impact: nurses applied trauma-informed tools such as the stress bucket, improving patient engagement
- practice development impact: participants used PSI to design new service models
- professional impact: we supported nurses' confidence and career progression in mental health.

We also explored innovating through creative engagement with the development of Blue, a play exploring wellbeing, stigma, and compassionate leadership, fostering cultural dialogue in health care.



Read more:
Search "**RCN learn**" on the RCN website.

Specialist training on domestic abuse

In June, RCN Northern Ireland launched a project with Women's Aid and Queen's University, Belfast to provide specialist training on domestic abuse and violence against women. Queen's is the first university in the UK to receive this training which officially commenced in November. It will be delivered annually to pre-registration nursing students throughout their degree programme and aims to equip future nurses with the skills to recognise abuse, respond effectively to disclosures and connect patients with support services.

Neonatal accreditation

In November, the RCN began the work of accrediting neonatal QIS training providers against the newly published NHSE standards for this training. While the NMC quality assure undergraduate nursing courses, there is no such mechanism for post-registration (QIS education) courses. The British Association of Perinatal Medicine (BAPM) Standards will include a requirement that a minimum of 70% of nurses working on neonatal units have completed QIS training that meets the new standards and CQC will use completion rates of the courses as a quality metric.

Nursing support workers (NSWs)

The Nursing Practice Academy delivered multiple educational events across the UK for NSWs, including: how to identify and raise concerns webinar, which attracted 82 attendees.

We also prepared for a major NSW conference, and, in collaboration with the Nursing Workforce Academy, published defined nursing support worker roles and level descriptors to clarify career pathways.

Internationally educated nurses

In May 2025 the RCN published a report looking at the challenges facing internationally educated nursing (IEN) staff and examining why internationally educated nursing staff are looking to leave the UK. We made recommendations of how the government can improve retention of IEN staff.

In May, analysis of Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) data showed just under 20,000 nurses from outside the UK joined the register in the 12-months before April 2025. This number was down by nearly a third compared to the same period the previous year. This decline in international nurses joining the UK workforce is worrying because they make up around a quarter of all nurses on the register. RCN is planning a piece of work on ethical international recruitment in 2026.

The RCN continues to raise concerns regarding the exploitation of IEN staff particularly in the social care sector. We continue to raise that the skilled worker system makes staff more vulnerable to exploitation and have raised this in our submissions including to the Public Accounts Committee. DHSC has established 15 regional partnerships to support workers whose sponsorship licence has been revoked. We also successfully stopped one employer from charging migrant members £2,500 for visa fees associated with TUPE transfer.

Bringing the issue to decision makers, we raised questions with ministers and briefed into a number of debates including on the Modern Slavery Act 2015 where we were mentioned. The RCN also raised issues around migrant workers being exploited while lobbying around the Employment Rights Bill, and highlighted concerns for victims of trafficking in our Border Security, Asylum and Immigration Bill lobbying.

3. Policy and lobbying

Being the voice of nursing means that we must speak for the profession wherever we need to drive action or shine a light on the incredible work our members do. Lobbying and influencing policy is essential to create change, particularly in our priority work areas. Fair pay, safe staffing, nurse education, EDI, corridor care and nursing excellence all require us to campaign, collaborate and make sure that decision makers take note of our expertise. Sometimes our impact comes from one-on-one conversations with senior officials and sometimes it comes from mobilising our whole membership. Here are some of the highlights of 2025.

Corridor care

Treating people in inappropriate spaces such as car parks and waiting rooms has become increasingly common. It's unsafe, undignified and unacceptable, and has devastating consequences for patients and nursing staff. In 2025 we continued to put pressure on government to end the practice.

On the frontline of the UK's corridor care crisis

THE ISSUE

At the beginning of 2025, the RCN had seen little government progress on ending corridor care.

THE ACTION

We published a landmark report on corridor care, drawing on testimony from over 5,000 nursing staff. Individual reports were also published for Scotland and Wales revealing harrowing accounts of unsafe treatment

being delivered in inappropriate spaces on a daily basis and included the raw, unedited and often heart-breaking responses of nursing staff working across the UK.

We also formed a coalition of health and patient care organisations in January 2025. The Corridor Care Coalition brings together over 16 organisations with a shared commitment to ending the unsafe and undignified practice of caring for patients in corridors. By combining frontline experience, lived experience, research and policy expertise, the RCN has worked alongside the Coalition over the last year to continue to expose the scale and impact of corridor care - and ensure it is recognised as a serious patient safety and workforce issue.

THE IMPACT

As a result of our action, Health Secretary Wes Streeting has committed to ending corridor care by the end of this parliament, as well as committing to publishing data on the extent of corridor care in order to bring to light the full scale of the issue and find solutions. We are continuing to call on government to publish the data.

Our campaigning also led to the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) – which carries out independent patient safety investigations in England's NHS and independent health care settings – launching and publishing an investigation into corridor care, the first of its kind. The report was published in January 2026 and found corridor care is becoming more permanent, putting further pressure on the government.

Instigating change through health and safety

THE ISSUE

A major implication of corridor care is people being treated and working in spaces that are not only unfit for purpose, but potentially dangerous.

THE ACTION

In February we held a successful roundtable with key clinical stakeholders including Healthcare Improvement Scotland, the Scottish Ambulance Service, Scotland’s nurse directors, the Scottish Academy of Medical Royal Colleges and the BMA looking at corridor care’s challenges and solutions in Scotland’s NHS.

In April, RCN Wales and BMA Cymru Wales launched a joint Senedd petition calling on the Welsh Government to act to address corridor care. It exceeded the necessary 10,000 signatures. (See case study)

THE IMPACT

- as a result of RCN campaigning, the Health Services Safety Investigations Body (HSSIB) announced an investigation into ‘temporary care environments’ in England in August 2025
- our work to influence Healthcare Improvement Scotland has resulted in a marked change in their approach to reporting on corridor care in their safe delivery of care in acute hospital inspection programme
- the Health Minister in Northern Ireland directed all HSC trusts to formally record episodes of corridor care from June 2025. This includes any instance where patients receive treatment outside designated clinical areas
- in July, we met officials from the Department of Health to discuss which data will be recorded and published. We were advised that the Department of Health’s Information & Analysis Directorate is incorporating corridor care data into routine hospital statistics, alongside emergency care activity and waiting times. It is expected that the first report will be published early in 2026
- the RCN Scotland Director was invited to discuss our concerns directly with Scotland’s First Minister.

Senedd debate

In April 2025, RCN Wales and BMA Cymru Wales launched a joint Senedd Petition calling on the Welsh Government to act to address corridor care. The petition was open for signatures for six months attracted more than the 10,000 signatures needed to be considered by the Senedd Petitions Committee for debate.

The committee agreed the debate should go ahead on 10 December and also wrote to the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care asking for his response to the petition calls.

The petition and debate enabled RCN Wales and BMA Cymru Wales to secure mainstream media coverage including BBC Radio Wales, ITV Wales news, BBC Wales news, Wales Online and Nation Cymru with a number of journalists attending the actual debate.

MSs from across the political spectrum and across Wales took part in the debate, in addition to the Petitions Committee Chair and the Cabinet Secretary.

Fair pay for nursing

Despite the government promising ‘change’, it has done little to deliver structural pay reform that reflects the safety-critical role of our profession. We remain undervalued with the lack of recognition having far reaching effects in the profession.

Get Out The Vote (GOTV)

THE ISSUE

Pay awards consistently undervalue the contribution of the nursing profession. We will not stop fighting for fair pay for our members until our reward recognises our value. No one should be struggling to live comfortably.

THE ACTION

Members and staff worked together to mobilise thousands more members in a strong turnout in the 2025 pay consultation. We relaunched our training for members who stepped forward to play their part in engaging others in GOTV actions, and re-issued an updated toolkit to assist workplace engagement. We delivered briefings and a GOTV session for IENs co-developed with activists from diaspora groups. We also consulted members working in the IHSC sector for employers including Erskine, Manx Care, Four Seasons Health Care, Coveberry and the Care Inspectorate.

THE IMPACT

- NHS/HSC pay consultations across England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales in 2025 all achieved more than 50% turn outs
- our membership is growing and we are turning out more individual votes than in last year’s consultation. This was most pronounced in England, where over 30,000 more members voted than in 2024’s consultation
- turnout data showed a 7% increase in female member representation this year
- building on successful implementation in 2024, we continued to improve our voter targeting, with three quarters of votes captured through email buttons
- in Scotland, members working in the NHS voted to accept a two-year pay offer from Scottish government in the spring of 2025. This offer included a landmark guarantee that the increases will be at least 1% above inflation in each year. Over 60% of members who voted chose to accept the offer
- in the first year of the new Westminster government, the Health Secretary announced that government would accept the PRB’s recommendation for NHS staff pay. This equated to a 3.6% pay award for NHS staff in England. The Welsh government announced an equivalent award
- in Northern Ireland, the Executive agreed to reinstate parity, with the Pay Review Body’s recommended percentage uplifts to be fully backdated to 1 April 2025. The Minister also pledged to prioritise future pay awards within his budget-planning to prevent delays in payment, addressing a key concern raised by the RCN and its members. In December 2025, the Northern Ireland Executive announced that investment for the HSC pay increase had been found, and would be paid to HSC staff in February 2025.



PRB boycott

THE ISSUE

Traditionally the UK government has relied on ‘independent’ pay review body to recommend public sector pay awards, including for pay in the NHS.

THE ACTION

The RCN joined 13 other health unions to call for the Westminster government to urgently begin promised direct talks on NHS pay reform and future pay awards. These talks are anticipated to begin early in 2026.

THE IMPACT

The government misled unions to expect direct negotiations on a multi-year pay deal. Instead, it returned to a flawed NHS Pay Review Body process that the RCN believes fails nursing staff. In February 2026, the Westminster government announced the 2026/27 NHS pay award will be 3.3%.

Fair pay for GP nurses

THE ISSUE

In 2024/25 government pay awards for general practice promised a pay increase for both GPs and practice staff. However, the structures and accountability of practices to pass on pay awards with additional funding are inconsistent across the UK. Insights from the RCN’s GP nursing survey revealed significant concerns regarding inconsistent pay structures, limited communication from employers about employment terms, and growing financial pressures.

THE ACTION

The survey findings not only supported campaigning and lobbying by RCN members, they also informed RCN’s wider national advocacy for fair and transparent reward systems in the independent sector pay negotiations. In 2025, over 700 people wrote to their MP calling for nursing to have a voice at the table in GP contract negotiations.

THE IMPACT

- following RCN member campaigning and lobbying, the Westminster government has consistently confirmed pay awards should be paid to all practice staff
- our survey data shows that the RCN’s work, including working closely with the BMA, has seen the rate of payment increase among GPN members.

Supporting the independent sector

THE ISSUE

Members on the Isle of Man were in dispute with their employer, Manx Care - the public sector health care provider on the island – following the rejection of the 4% pay offer for 2024/5.

THE ACTION

Members took part in an RCN indicative ballot where 70% of those who voted said they would be willing to consider strike action.

This led to the RCN further negotiating with Manx Care on behalf of members with the issue being referred to Manx Industrial Relations Service (MIRS).

THE IMPACT

- following conciliation talks between RCN regional staff, branch officials and Manx Care, a further offer has now been presented to members which is to be consulted on in early 2026
- members are being paid the 4% while talks continue.

Staffing for safe and effective care

It is proven that safe staffing numbers deliver better outcomes for patients and improved wellbeing for staff. We've worked tirelessly on what safe staffing really means and what is required to implement it.

THE ACTION

In July 2025, the RCN's statement on substitution was updated underlining that a registered nurse must never be substituted with any other health care professionals including nursing support workers.

THE IMPACT

- the Nursing Workforce Academy will monitor this position statement and lead on future developments.



Role progression and job evaluation

Nursing staff need clear career progression pathways and to have their accountability and responsibility for patient safety recognised through their job evaluations.

Bands 5-6

THE ISSUE

The RCN has been calling for change and a focus on nursing career progression for years. In April 2025, the Westminster government ruled out our proposals for a separate pay spine for NHS nursing staff. We have continued to call for change and proposed the use of Annex 20 to uplift Band 5 staff in submissions to government, including our 2025 Spending Review submission.



THE ACTION

At Congress 2025 we set out the case for nursing progression in *Pathway to Progression: band 5-6 career progression for nursing*. And in December, published further evidence which revealed the scale of the problem facing NHS nurses struggling to progress. The report: *Left Behind: a review of evidence on the career progression of NHS nurses* found too many nurses remain stuck at entry-level pay bands, despite often working at a higher level, with serious consequences for staff morale, patient care and nursing staff retention.

RCN Northern Ireland presented written and oral evidence to the Northern Ireland Assembly Committee for Health in September, on the need to implement pay and career progression for nurses. It was agreed that the RCN will work with the Chief Nursing Officer and other Department of Health officials on the career progression framework for nursing, and to establish how this will link with the appropriate recognition and remuneration of nursing roles.

THE IMPACT

- During the Health and Social Care Select Committee in Westminster in December 2025, Health Secretary Wes Streeting directly referenced RCN General Secretary & Chief Executive Prof Nicola Ranger and our asks on pay reform and career progression for nurses stuck at band 5. His remarks underline the weight of the RCN's evidence, and he confirmed he is 'looking at the band 5-6 issue'.
- In January 2026 the wording of Annex 20 of the NHS Terms and Conditions was updated as a result of RCN campaigning and lobbying during 2025. This change removed a significant barrier to nursing access to job evaluation and career progression in the NHS by recognising the accountability and responsibility nurses take on early in their careers.

New nursing role profiles

THE ACTION

Long-term campaigning and lobbying from the RCN.

THE IMPACT

- new nursing profiles were released in 2025. These profiles, once implemented fully and properly, should improve the career progression of nurses early in their career; increase the clear differences between bands for nursing support workers; and create more opportunities for nursing staff to work as team leaders or managers, as well as specialists throughout their careers
- the profiles will be implemented across the UK as employers have been tasked with reviewing nursing roles across organisations and uplifting or supporting job evaluation processes for their workforce
- in Scotland, a review of all band 5 roles was agreed as part of the pay offer in 2024/25. This year roadshows have begun to launch this work. Thousands of members have been part of this work, with 80% of roles being successfully uplifted
- in Wales, changes to band 2 and band 3 role profiles which came into effect in 2021 have received historic national agreement. This will see thousands of HCSWs re-banded from Band 2 to Band 3, recognising the vital clinical duties they perform and ensuring fair pay for their contribution to patient care. Following re-assessment uplifted staff will also receive backdated pay and recognition payments for performing band 3 duties prior to re-banding.

Agenda for Change reform

THE ISSUE

Members on the Isle of Man were in dispute with their employer, Manx Care - the public sector health care provider on the island – following the rejection of the 4% pay offer for 2024/5.

THE ACTION

In negotiations with the Westminster government in 2023, it was agreed that additional funding would be provided to NHS Staff Council to address structural reforms needed to NHS pay structures. This has not happened yet and throughout 2025 we have continued to make the case for nursing to government and call for talks on structural reforms to begin with NHS Staff Council.

THE IMPACT

Government will soon confirm the funding envelope available for these discussions and begin negotiations with NHS Staff Council. These discussions are a direct result of RCN strike action and negotiations.

COVID-19 Inquiry

Reviewing the response

THE ISSUE

As nursing and midwifery staff, our members were at the centre of the UK's response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Their experiences are key to evaluating what went wrong and informing a better approach to a future pandemic. We have an important role to play in making sure the voice of nursing is heard during both the UK-wide and Scottish COVID-19 inquiries.

THE ACTION

New RCN data has been collected showing the number of members who have called the RCN advice line to seek support for long COVID.

In March, Rose Gallagher, RCN Professional Lead, appeared at Module 5 of the COVID Inquiry which focused on the procurement of PPE.

We held a one-day event in recognition of five years since the WHO declared a global pandemic. A chance to reflect of the on-going impact of the pandemic, what we have learnt and looking to the future.

The event involved speakers from across nursing with 107 delegates attending online and in person.

THE IMPACT

RCN members' experiences have been firmly placed at the centre of the COVID-19 Inquiry process. Through the collection of member data, frontline testimony, and sustained engagement, the realities faced by nursing staff during the pandemic are being clearly documented and recognised.

The RCN has been a prominent voice throughout the Inquiry, with our evidence and contribution featuring heavily in Module 3. This reflects the strength, credibility and influence of the nursing perspective in shaping the Inquiry's understanding of events.

ICB cuts

In April 2025, Prime Minister Keir Starmer announced that NHS England would be abolished, alongside further arm's length bodies. These changes, combined with significant cuts across ICBs represent the largest change to how the NHS in England is managed in over a decade.

The RCN has been active with members in these employers, quickly supporting training and development to increase workplace representation, working closely with fellow trade unions to support the collective needs of nursing staff, and published significant work outlining the role of nursing in health care management in England, titled *Nursing at the Helm*. This work has uncovered detail and increased transparency on essential issues for members, limited the risk to members that untested redundancy schemes posed and supported members to act in their best interest in the workplace.



Read more:

Get involved with our campaigns. Search “**campaign with us**” on the RCN website.



Working with governments

Making sure the voice of nursing is heard by the right people to drive change means that we are constantly working with politicians and policy makers in the UK governments. This doesn't just happen in our major campaign areas; we build relationships with those in power so we can provide trusted input on all matters relating to the profession. Overleaf is a snapshot of what we achieved in 2025.

Party conferences

RCN Scotland participated in the annual Health Hub discussion at the SNP party conference in October, alongside the Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care. The team also attended the Scottish Liberal Democrats and Scottish Green conferences during October.

Employment Rights Act

Throughout the legislative process of the Employment Rights Act, we worked closely with parliamentarians, officials and partner organisations to strengthen the act for nursing staff. Major wins include:

- expanded parental bereavement rights
- better protections for zero hours contract workers
- a fair pay agreement for social care
- restoration of trade union rights
- improved rights for women in the workplace
- the repeal of Minimum Service Levels legislation, removing regulations that limit the right of working people to go on strike, in a number of sectors, including health care.

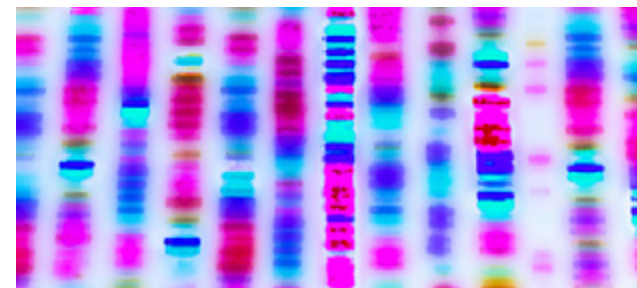


Commissioner for Older People Consultation

RCN Scotland submitted a response to the Scottish Parliament's call for views on the Commissioner for Older People (Scotland) Bill. Our response outlined support for the establishment of a commissioner and its proposed function to promote and safeguard the rights and interests of older people but raised some concerns over the proposed investigation role.

Genomics

Supporting nurses across England being trained as genomics champions in local communities to help patients get faster diagnoses and access life-saving treatment closer to home.



Nursing and Midwifery Taskforce Scotland

The report of the Ministerial Nursing and Midwifery Taskforce, secured as a result of RCN lobbying, was launched by Cabinet Secretary for Health and Social Care Neil Gray in February. We expressed our support for the report and its 44 recommendations, while underlining the need for the recommendations to be fully funded. Further RCN lobbying secured a revised structure for monitoring implementation of the Taskforce recommendations. With leadership from Scotland's new Chief Nursing Officer, the structure replicates the original Taskforce working groups on attraction, culture and leadership, education and development and wellbeing.

Protecting the title 'nurse'

To ensure our profession is protected, it is important the title of nurse is protected. Throughout 2025 the RCN supported members lobbying government and campaigning directly to see this change. Government announced that it would take forward protections for the title nurse, through secondary legislation. They confirmed that the change will be introduced through the update to the NMC Order.

Senedd election 2026 RCN Manifesto

The RCN Wales manifesto Stronger Nursing, Stronger Nation, was launched on 24 September 2025. Its themes formed the focus of the RCN Wales' activities at the Welsh Labour, Welsh Conservatives, Plaid Cymru and Welsh Green Party conferences in 2025. 1,156 RCN Wales Members responded to an online survey which informed the manifesto. Survey participants represented registered nurses, midwives, health care support workers, and nursing students from all five political regions of Wales.

The manifesto was shared with all MSs, all Welsh political parties and key civil servants. We gave briefings to Plaid Cymru and Welsh Conservatives health spokespeople and met with the Welsh Liberal Democrats and Welsh Green Party policy teams.



Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults Bill

The Assisted Dying for Terminally Ill Adults (Scotland) Bill completed stage 2 of the parliamentary process in November and RCN Scotland successfully influenced important changes to improve the safeguards for nursing staff.

The Scottish Bill includes a key role for registered nurses which differs significantly from the approach taken in the Westminster Bill. There were almost 300 amendments proposed to the Bill at Stage 2. A number of these were lodged on behalf of RCN Scotland to improve the safeguards and protections for nursing staff. We were successful in securing amendments which mean that a doctor must undertake the final assessments on capacity and coercion, that nurses should not provide assistance to die while working alone and on training for staff. Further changes replaced the conscientious objection clause with a no duty to participate clause which reflects our members concerns. Our achievements were secured in part through extensive detailed briefing of elected members. We also provided detailed information and FAQs for our members.

The Bill will move to stage 3 in early 2026.

4. Governance and leadership

Good governance is how we make sure the member voice guides the RCN. It is essential to making sure our organisation runs properly and fairly, and is identified in our five-year strategy as something which must underpin its delivery. It's also one of our 10 priority areas.

Strong leadership affects every part of what we do – supporting every goal and priority. From our culture and campaigning to our business model and pursuit of nursing excellence, our impact is amplified by good leadership.

Culture and Governance Reviews Programme

The Governance and Culture Reviews Programme was set up to oversee the implementation of recommendations arising from two independent reviews of the culture and governance of our College. There were 221 associated actions, and we've now completed 90% of them.

90%
of 221
deliverables
completed

We've streamlined further work by closing the Governance and Culture Reviews Joint Partnership Board and transferring oversight to the Governance Committee. This has freed up members' time and staff resources and removed unnecessary duplication.

Our next step is to evaluate our performance and make sure that new ways of working are embedded into business as usual. We are working with our external auditors to make sure we get it right.

AGM

The RCN Annual General Meeting gives members a direct say in key decisions affecting the nursing profession and the work of the RCN. Amendments to our governance strengthen our ways of working and underpin a healthy culture. We are committed to keep on building our engagement with members, and participating in the AGM is just one way to be involved in our democratic processes.

Member Involvement

One recommendation from the Governance and Culture Reviews was to define what we mean by 'member involvement'. Following engagement with the membership, the following definition was agreed:

'The world's largest combined nursing trade union and professional body, with a membership of over half a million, the RCN is a member-led organisation.'

'Every element of our organisation and every piece of our work has a governance framework around it, overseeing and holding it to account.'

'Working alongside expert external advisers, our governance roles, at every level, are held almost exclusively by our members.'

Standing orders

Resolutions changing how we govern the RCN require changes to our Standing Orders. These are rules which can be amended without changes being made to our Royal Charter.

In total, 3,489 members voted to pass all six resolutions to strengthen the RCN.

84.26%
in favour

Resolution 1

This resolution supported easier access to information for Council during decision making by including members of the RCN Executive Team as non-voting members of Council. This means RCN Council can hear directly from staff responsible for the day-to-day running of the College – such as the Chief Nursing Officer, Chief Financial Officer, and General Secretary & Chief Executive – as decisions are being made at official meetings. The exception to this is the Executive Director of Governance who facilitates Council meetings and is an intermediary between the elected Council members and the Executive Team.

88.44%
in favour

Resolution 2

This resolution set the number of Council members and Executive Team members who must be present at a Council meeting before any official business can be conducted. The number of members, known as the quorum, who must be present at any Council meeting to validate the proceedings is now at least half of Council (voting members) and at least two members of the Executive Team (non-voting).

92.62%
in favour

Resolution 3

The third resolution defined the role of the General Secretary & Chief Executive. It ensures members understand how responsibility is delegated by RCN Council and that it aligns with our Royal Charter.

77.85%
in favour

Resolution 4

Significant decisions need to be backed by robust processes. This resolution agreed that any Council decision to call a ballot for industrial action must be approved through a Special Resolution of Council. From now on, a voting threshold of a two-thirds majority will apply to starting the ballot process. The final decision on industrial action always remains with the RCN membership.

91%
in favour

Resolution 5

Strong financial decision making is essential for us to remain a viable organisation. This resolution agreed that Council will prepare an annual budget and that any funding decisions outside of it (or outside of limited discretionary funding), must be approved by a Special Resolution of Council. This means the voting threshold rises to a two-thirds majority and decisions on spending remain solely with the elected members on Council.

91.5%
in favour

Resolution 6

This final resolution introduced a definition of the Executive Team. By agreeing a clear definition, we provide clarity on what the Executive Team is and their responsibilities. This is important for any decisions that ask the Executive Team to do things; making sure members know exactly who is being asked and if it falls within their remit.



Read more:
Search “AGM” on the RCN website.

New appointments

Being the voice of nursing and having a thriving, engaged membership hinges on one thing – our members. As a member-led organisation, our members are at the forefront of influencing everything we do. Being a member of Council, a committee, board or forum gives individuals the opportunity to act on behalf of members within the RCN and to be involved in decision making on the issues that really matter to the wider profession..

RCN Council (as of 31 December 2025)



Bejoy Sebastian
RCN President



Natalie Brooks
Eastern, Vice-Chair
of Council



Jennifer Caguioa MBE
London, Chair of
Group Remuneration
Committee



Tristan Griffin
Wales



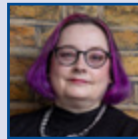
Olga Leach-Walters
West Midlands



Felix Adesanya
Student



**Professor Alison
Leary MBE FRCN**
Deputy President



Andrea Walters
Northern, Honorary
Treasurer



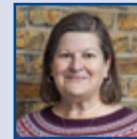
Anne Campbell
Northern Ireland,
Chair of Governance
Committee



Dr Sally Bassett
South East



Sian Grbin
Yorkshire & the
Humber



Linda Bailey
Chair of Congress
(Non-voting member
of Council)



Carmel O'Boyle
North West, Chair of
Council



Neil Thompson
East Midlands



Leanne Patrick QN
Scotland



Ashleigh Taylor
South West



Mark Jarnell
Nursing Support
Worker

Learning and Development Programme for Council

To support elected members in their roles, a new two-year Learning and Development Programme for Council members began in January 2025. It will support members to make sure every voice they represent is heard.

From 1 January 2026, an L&D programme has been rolled out for appointed and elected committee members.

RCN President and Deputy President

President of the Royal College of Nursing (2025-2026): Bejoy Sebastian

Deputy President of the Royal College of Nursing (2025-2026): Professor Alison Leary MBE FRCN

Chair and Vice-Chair of Congress, and Agenda Committee

Chair of Congress (2025-2026): Linda Bailey

Vice-Chair of Congress (2025-2026): Patience Bamisaye

Agenda Committee (2026-2027): Yetunde Ruquoyat Lawal, Josie Gordon, Claire Richardson and Dawn Marr

Country/Regional Boards

All country and regional boards held elections for board members in 2025.

Committees

The following committees held elections/made appointments in 2025.

Principal Committees

- Professional Nursing Committee
- Trade Union Committee

Scrutiny Committees

- Group Audit Committee
- Finance & Investment Committee
- Governance Committee
- Group Remuneration Committee

Representative Committees of Council

- Nursing Support Workers Committee
- Students Committee

Advisory Committees

- Group EDI Committee
- International Committee

UK Representative Committees

- UK Health & Safety Representatives' Committee

- UK Learning Representatives' Committee
- UK Stewards Committee

Other Committees

- Fellows Co-ordinating Committee
- Forum Chairs Group
- Forums Co-ordinating Committee

Integration of RCNi

In 2025 we worked towards bringing RCNi, a wholly owned subsidiary of the RCN, into the organisation. This meant that as of 1 January 2026, RCNi, became fully integrated, strengthening our professional offer and support to our Institute of Nursing Excellence to achieve its goals.



Read more:
Search “**structure**” on the RCN website.

5. Events and engagement

From involving members in our democratic processes and being recognised as the voice of nursing, to the conference revenue that sustains us and the development opportunities so vital to our members – events and engagement are essential to making sure our work reaches the right people.

Events overview

In 2025, we hosted 640 events – that’s more than 53 a month! – bringing the nursing community together to share skills, knowledge, ideas and pride in our profession.



i **Read more:**
Search “**events**” on the RCN website.

Congress 2025

RCN Congress is the largest event in our calendar. It’s an opportunity for members to come together to debate the big issues facing the profession and to choose the direction our future work will take. It’s also a key point in the year for us to advocate for members and raise nursing issues on the national agenda.

i **Read more:**
Search “**Congress 2025**” on the RCN website.

Congress - engagement in numbers



- KEY STORIES OF THE WEEK**
- Celebrating International Nurses' Day
 - Chief Executive & General Secretary's speech
 - Corridor care and safe staffing
 - Nursing education
 - Internationally educated nursing staff report

RCN Awards 2025

The RCN Awards recognise impact and achievement in our profession. Our awardees are nominated by their nursing peers for their unwavering dedication, pioneering work and outstanding contributions.

RCN Fellowship

Recognising innovative members who've made an exceptional commitment to advancing the science and practice of nursing, and the improvement of health and patient care.

- Professor Judith Ellis OBE
- Professor Diana Greenfield
- Kumbi Kariwo
- Dr Felicia Kwaku OBE
- Professor Juliet MacArthur
- Wendy Olayiwola BEM
- Professor John Unsworth OBE

RCN Honorary Fellowships

Celebrating influential nursing figures outside of our membership.

- Dr Diana Lyn Baptiste
- Dr Pamela F Cipriano
- Prof Azita Emami
- Prof Debra Jackson
- Dr Elizabeth A Madigan
- Linda Silas

30
individuals
honoured for
their impact



RCN Award of Merit

The highest honour the RCN can give for voluntary service to the College, honouring active members who've gone above and beyond.

- Jim Blair
- Tracie Culpitt
- Kevin H Morley
- Anne Penny
- Matthew Stewart
- Sheilabye Sobrany

RCN Student Ambassador of the Year Award

Celebrating student ambassadors who are making an impact at their university by recruiting and supporting RCN student members, organising events and campaigning.

- Winner - Jenna Green
- Commended – Lauren Healan



RCN Representative of the Year

Our reps champion the RCN’s goals and priorities in the workplace; leading campaigning, supporting our members and driving forward our achievements. The Representative of the Year awards recognise outstanding commitment to the RCN and its members.

RCN Steward of the Year

- Winner - Ian Graham
- Commended - Leslie Morgan

RCN Health and Safety Rep of the Year

- Winner – Matthew Hull
- Commended - Amanda Milward

RCN Learning Rep of the Year

- Winner - Jia Amada
- Commended - Wilhelmino Rongavilla

RCN Forum Achievement


The RCN’s professional forums represent expertise and innovation in specific areas of practice. The Forum Achievement Awards recognise members who have excelled in promoting and developing the work of their forums as part of the collective strength of nursing.

Forum Member of the Year

- Winner – Mohamad Ibrahim, Cancer Forum
- Commended – Sarah Rogers, History of Nursing

Forum Committee Member of the Year

- Winner – Sarah Jackson, Learning Disability Nursing
- Commended – Michael Nevill, Women’s Health

 **Read more:**
Search “RCN Awards” on the RCN website.

Nurse of the Year Awards

Our impact is felt in every corner of the UK and as such, we celebrate excellence with awards across our four countries .

- RCN Northern Ireland Nurse of the Year - Kelly Forbes
- RCN Scotland Nurse of the Year - Kirsty Cartin
- RCN Wales Nurse of the Year Awards - Annie Clothier



Read more:

Search “**Nurse of the Year**” on the RCN website.

Conferences

Learning, development, collaboration, discussion, networking, innovation and improvement – conferences provide a great opportunity to expand our knowledge and horizons. They promote excellence in nursing through providing a forum for the profession to come together, and excellence within the work of the College through supporting activism and governance. From a practical point of view, they also generate the income which benefits our whole membership and supports our future sustainability.



RCN Education Forum Conference: Advancing the Nursing Workforce through inclusion and practice



Joint Reps conference Spring – Bristol Autumn – Leeds



RCN Research Conference First ever RCN Research Strategy launched



Activists conference in Scotland



First in-person retired members conference: Future of activism for retired nurses



EDI Conference: Inclusive language and navigating when things go wrong



Read more:

Find out about new events. Search “**events**” on the RCN website.

6. Equity, diversity and inclusion

EDI remained a central priority in 2025. It is essential that our membership reflects the diversity of nursing so our voice can speak for all. However, that's not just about the numbers adding up – we're striving for engaged members who influence and shape our work. That's why our EDI strategy has been identified as a priority and actively ensuring inclusion is central to our success. A detailed overview of our EDI strategy activity is being published separately, but you can discover some of our highlights below.



EDI and PPE

We're exploring inclusive design of personal protective equipment (PPE). Size ranges, culturally sensitive options, compatibility with assistive devices and workplaces where staff feel safe to raising concerns are all on the agenda. A position statement and guidance are being worked on.

Rising stars

The London region celebrated the incredible contribution of capital's global majority nursing community in its Rising Star Awards. 12 RCN London members were honoured from more than 130 nominees.

EDI conference

At our annual conference supported inclusive workplaces and explored the importance of being able to use inclusive language and what to do when things go wrong.

Pride

This year we gave 20,000 Pride in Nursing badges to members, and saw social media engagement more than double with our celebration video achieving 32,000 views alone.



Black History Month

This year our activities followed the national BHM theme of 'Standing firm in power and pride.' We shared video content from our members, filmed at an RCN London BHM event and shared a blog from Rosetta West on what the theme means to her.



Men in Nursing project

This examines inclusion and gender diversity within the profession. Four focus groups have explored the experiences of male members and feedback from these sessions is currently being analysed to inform next steps.

Discrimination in the IHSC

Following an NMC inquiry showing younger males from global majority backgrounds are disproportionately referred for disciplinary and fitness to practise procedures, a project group has been established to develop a comprehensive support programme.

Member EDI networks

Our networks came a step closer in December when a small number of interested members came to London to share their thoughts. A dedicated member EDI network officer has now been appointed to oversee the work.

GEM

The Nursing Practice Academy launched the Global and Ethnic Minority (GEM) Project, an action-research initiative to identify and address barriers to career progression for nursing staff from global majority and ethnic minority backgrounds.



Read more:
Search “EDI” on the RCN website.



Anti-racist College

We established an anti-racist subgroup of the EDI Committee and recruited member experts to oversee the development and implementation of an anti-racism action plan.



Advocacy for all member voices

Following the Supreme Court judgment on the meaning of sex in the Equality Act 2010, we gave members the opportunity to share their views with us and the impact on nursing at a series of member engagement events.

**In-house legal team recovered
£2,679,730**

We also published a statement following the judgment. We are now waiting for the government to confirm it has accepted the Equality & Human Rights Commission's updated Code of Practice for service providers.

Legal support

Evonne Hunt vs Medway NHS Trust

Our legal team played a key role in securing the reinstatement of Chief Nursing Officer Evonne Hunt at Medway NHS Foundation Trust, following a two-year process that exposed serious organisational failings around race discrimination.

Instead of addressing the issues Evonne raised, the trust suspended her, stating that allegations were made against her. With the RCN's support, Evonne was seconded to other NHS organisations while the investigation took place. It concluded there was no case to answer and highlighted systemic failures, including the trust's failure to investigate race discrimination concerns and inequitable treatment.

In the meantime, the RCN had issued a claim of race discrimination and whistleblowing detriment against the board and 12 of its senior members. While the trust was willing to investigate the complaints that led to Evonne being seconded, they were not interested in investigating the culture of racism and the other concerns she had raised.

Our involvement, prompted the trust to deal with Evonne's concerns proactively. We were then able to commission professional mediation with a KC, succeeding in resolving the legal proceedings and complaints.

Evonne said: 'The support I received from the RCN was incredible. I leaned heavily on them in times where I felt overwhelmed, and they always remained understanding, compassionate, kind and professional.'

McGuinness v Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust

A community nurse member employed at Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust suffered a brain haemorrhage in 2016 and after a failed attempt to return thought that was the end of his nursing career.

However, once an RCN representative got involved, he was promised a reasonable adjustment package to support his return. However, after waiting months for the equipment to arrive, he was not offered any training on how to use it and continued to struggle at work. He began to experience depression.

Despite being told he would not need to carry out the nurse co-ordinator role, he was asked to fill in for an absent colleague and suffered an acute mental health crisis during the shift. He didn't return to work, and eventually retired on ill health grounds.

Our claim for disability discrimination, personal injury and injury to feelings was not a straightforward and relied on the expert evidence of a neuropsychiatrist, and impact statements from the member's family. However, in a highly contested case, we successfully recovered £202,000 for our member.



Read more:

Get involved with our campaigns. Search "legal support" on the RCN website.

International work and partnerships

Nursing is a global profession, and this year we renewed our international reach. By partnering with the International Council of Nurses and engaging with global affairs, we ensured our members' voices were heard on the world stage.

Global affairs

The RCN International Academy has advanced multiple global initiatives to strengthen nursing leadership, education, and resilience in challenging contexts.

Gaza and West Bank

Conflict has devastated health care systems, leaving nurses without leadership support. We co-designed a 12-month Leadership and Quality Diploma, based on ICN and Sigma frameworks, launching April 2026. Seed funding is secured, but additional resources are needed to restore the original cohort size. This is the first leadership programme for Palestinian nurses since the Gaza conflict escalation.

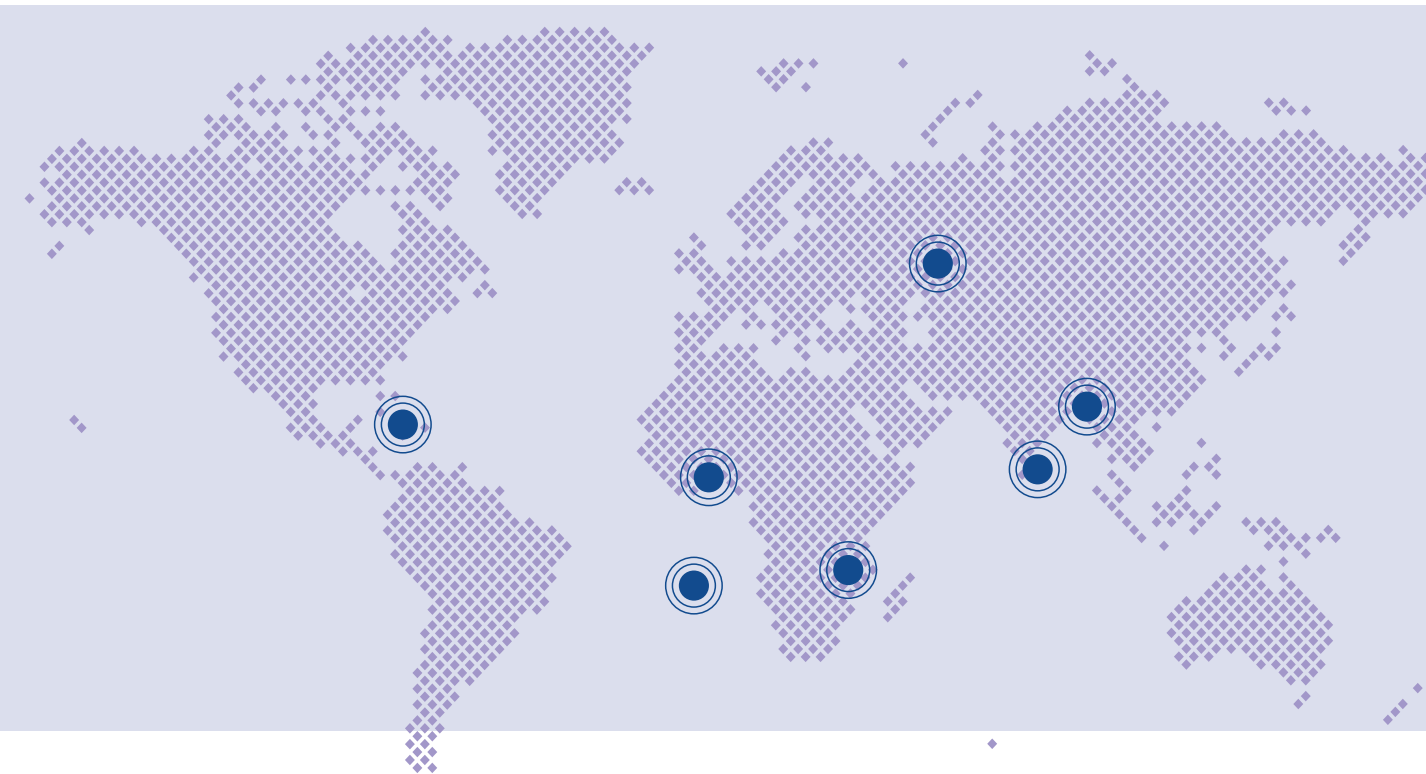
Ghana

The RCN, Ghana's Ministry of Health, and GRNMA are collaborating to strengthen nursing leadership and governance in public hospitals.

A UK-Ghana working group has been established, and discussions on funding practical initiatives are underway. This is the first RCN-led governance programme in Ghana, laying the foundation for improved hospital care and leadership capacity.

Malawi

Malawi faces severe workforce shortages and limited professional growth opportunities. The RCN partnered with the National Organization of Nurses and Midwives Malawi and other partners to focus on leadership and research capacity. Priorities include revitalising the Malawi Journal of Nursing Research and securing funding for nurse-led research in critical care and patient safety.



Myanmar

Since the 2021 military coup, Myanmar's health system has faced severe disruption, leaving nurses vulnerable and education systems fractured. In response, the RCN launched a three-year undergraduate nursing degree and a one-year bridging programme, now operational in several regions with donor support. As of December 2025, 127 students are enrolled. This is the first programme globally to deliver a high-quality nursing degree in a conflict setting, creating a foundation for long-term health system recovery.

Sri Lanka

Amid recovery from conflict and economic instability, Sri Lanka is reforming primary care to address rising non-communicable diseases. The RCN supports the development of public health nursing officers (PHNOs) through workshops and curriculum revision. More than 300 PHNOs completed a consolidation workshop in 2025. Partnerships with WHO, MoH, and Rotary International aim to secure funding for a two-year programme to scale multidisciplinary care nationally.

UK Overseas Territories (UKOT)

Funded by UKHSA, this programme supports senior nursing teams in Cayman, BVI, Anguilla, and St Helena through two streams: quality improvement and mental health. Achievements include introducing plan-do-study-act (PDSA) cycles for diabetes care, wound management and triage, and delivering mental health workshops and supervision groups with strong engagement. A Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes (KSA) assessment is underway to address workforce data gaps. The pilot concludes in April 2026, with plans for expansion into leadership development.

Care amongst the chaos

Our new report published in October 2025, focused on the experiences of nursing staff working in conflict zones around the world. The report raises awareness of the rising incidence of violence against health care staff and presents accounts from nursing staff working in war zones and insecure regions including Afghanistan, Gaza, Lebanon and Myanmar.

European Public Services Unions

Prisons

The EPSU Prison Services Network meeting in Stockholm brought together trade union representatives from across Europe to address the growing challenges in prison services. At the event we presented the work of the Joint Unions in Prisons Alliance (JUPA) and introduced the new Safe Inside Prisons Charter, which sets out principles to improve health, safety, and wellbeing for all staff working in prisons.

Discussions focused on urgent issues such as chronic overcrowding, staff shortages, rising violence and aggression towards staff, secondary exposure of staff to psychoactive substance and illicit drugs, neglected rehabilitation programs, and ageing infrastructure.

Occupational Health and Safety Specialists Group

We attended the first in person meeting of the group in Brussels where many of the topics related directly to our current workplan. Presentations on the link between breast cancer, ionising radiation, night shift working and chemicals such as ethylene oxide, asbestos, climate change, violence, psychosocial risks in the workplace and musculoskeletal disorders all provided relevant insight into issues experienced by our own members.



Read more:

Search “**international**” on the RCN website.

7. Looking ahead

As we move through 2026, our position is clear and unwavering. We will continue to:

- call out corridor care as unsafe, undignified and unacceptable, and insist that it must never be considered normal practice
- fight for fair pay across the UK, in both the NHS and independent sectors
- tackle discrimination in the workplace and champion equity, diversity and inclusion
- advocate strongly our members and the nursing profession campaign and lobby governments across the UK to drive meaningful change
- celebrate the achievements and contributions of our members support the wellbeing of our workforce in the face of ongoing pressures
- develop and empower members at every stage of their careers strengthen connections and collaboration with international partners

Together, these priorities reflect our commitment to the profession, improving working conditions and ensuring nursing staff are valued, supported and heard – now and into the future.





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