



Royal College of Nursing

Shaping nursing since 1916

# RCN BULLETIN

ISSUE NO. 335 JANUARY 2016

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# CELEBRATION

MARKING 100 YEARS OF THE RCN



# 2 NEWS

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

**Editor:** Kim Scott  
**Editorial:** 020 7647 3627  
**Email:** bulletin@rcn.org.uk  
**Web:** www.rcn.org.uk/bulletin  
**Address:** 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN  
**Classified advertising**  
**Tel:** 020 8423 1333  
**Fax:** 020 8872 3197  
**Email:** advertising@rcni.com

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## New website improves on the move experience

The RCN's new website is now live, providing members with an exciting new platform that's bright, clear and easy to navigate.

Not only has the design and content been refreshed, but the site also adapts to different devices – be it computer, tablet or smartphone – reflecting the necessity for members to access information on the go.

It's still a work in progress, and over the coming weeks the representatives' area, forum pages and clinical pages will be developed to ensure they become valuable resources for members.

You can share your views on the new site using the orange feedback tab on the right side of each page.

See [www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)

## Apply now for an RCNi Nurse Award

Members have until 22 January to get their entries in for the RCNi Nurse Awards 2016. The awards identify exceptional nursing professionals who demonstrate clinical excellence and who have implemented new initiatives that have enhanced patient experience, improved health outcomes and transformed nursing practice. Visit <http://tinyurl.com/h4yydyw>

## Nurses honoured

RCN members were among more than 30 nursing professionals recognised in the new year's honours list. Public Health England's Chief Nurse Viv Bennett was awarded a CBE. Nursing Adviser for Wales Jane Collier became an MBE.

See a full list of nurses honoured at <http://tinyurl.com/gvrht58>

## NI industrial action ballot imminent

The RCN is preparing to ballot members in Northern Ireland on industrial action, short of strike action, over the lack of a 2015-16 pay award for nursing staff.

RCN Northern Ireland Director Janice Smyth said: "This is a failure in equality. Not only are our members now paid less than their counterparts in England, Scotland and Wales, but many other public servants here have received a pay award."



An experienced staff nurse in Northern Ireland is now paid £279 a year less than in England and £561 a year less than in Scotland



## Students stage further protest over bursary cut

Nursing students angered over plans to scrap the bursary in England were due to take part in a mass demonstration as *RCN Bulletin* went to press. The protest in London was set for 9 January with a debate in Westminster Hall (see page 5) scheduled two days later. More than 1,300 members have submitted evidence to the RCN in support of keeping the bursary. It will be used in negotiations with government.



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Shaping nursing since 1916

## Could you be a winner in 2016?

As part of the centenary celebrations, the RCN wants to thank members for their loyalty. During the course of 2016, 100 members will be drawn at random to receive a free membership for the year. Look out for an RCN letter to see if you're a winner. If you don't respond within three months, the offer will expire.

Don't let this opportunity pass you by. Please open your RCN post and follow the instructions to claim your prize. And remember, if your contact details aren't up to date, your letter may never arrive.

Check your details at [www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn](http://www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn)

## Members top the charts

Three RCN members were part of the NHS choir which made it to Christmas number one in the UK singles chart. Charity song *A Bridge Over You*, by the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS Choir, captured the public's imagination and earned the endorsement of Canadian pop singer Justin Bieber, who was in competition for the top spot.

Nurses Caroline Duffy, Elem Nnachi and Belinda Champion are part of the choir, which includes all types of NHS staff.

# Nursing associate role offers development opportunities for HCAs

The RCN has welcomed proposals to create a new nursing support role in England



The plans, announced by the Department of Health late last year, will see a new role created to bridge the gap between health care assistants (HCAs) and registered nurses. It's proposed that staff trained through this route will learn on the job via an apprenticeship leading to a foundation degree.

RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies said: "This recognises the value of health care assistants and is an initiative which will allow them to develop their skills. Part of this is about enabling people in unregulated positions, supporting registered nurses, to access training via a clear structure, and this is something we have long campaigned for."

It is hoped nursing associates will release time for nurses to use their specialist training to focus on clinical duties and take more of a lead in decisions about patient care. The Government has said it will also look at what opportunities

there are for staff in this role to become registered nurses through either a degree level nurse apprenticeship or a shortened nursing degree at university.

**The fundamental role of the registered nurse does not change**

Janet added: "We will be responding in full to the consultation on these plans and the opportunity they may present to those working in support roles. Health care assistants are of huge value to patients and nurses alike. Their assistance enables nurses to deliver high quality care. However, these support roles must never be used as a substitute for graduate, registered nurses. Research shows that nurse numbers have a significant impact on survival and this should not be compromised."

## Members urged to join fight for fair pay as pension changes cause further financial hardship



The RCN is warning that the value of any potential pay award for NHS staff could be erased by the impact of state pension changes coming in from April.

Introduction of the single state pension will signal an end to arrangements which have seen NHS pension scheme members paying a reduced rate of national insurance contributions (NICs).

In three months' time those workers, and others in public sector schemes, will have to pay an extra 1.4 per cent of their salary in NICs.

With the Government standing firm on not funding a pay rise that adds more than one per cent to the annual NHS wage bill, the loss could in effect obliterate any potential pay award for nursing staff.

Head of Employment Relations Josie Irwin said it's more important than ever for members to get behind the RCN's campaign for fair pay.

"For too long we've been told there isn't enough money to pay NHS staff a decent wage and members' living standards have been dropping as a result," she stressed.

"Restraining pay while demand increases is a false economy, making it harder for the NHS to hold on to the staff it needs to deliver safe care. A one per cent cap is not the way to show loyal, dedicated nursing staff that they are valued. It needs to be rethought."

The RCN's *Nursing Counts* campaign aims to influence politicians by using member stories to demonstrate the complexity of nursing. Share your thoughts on the demanding and skilled nature of your role at [www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts/tell-us-your-story](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts/tell-us-your-story)

“

The effects of continued short-sightedness on pay will be serious for nurses and patients alike

### 100 Help capture care on camera

There's still time to enter the RCN's centenary photography competition. Open to members and the public, photographers of every skill level are invited to capture images of modern nursing. Pictures will be added to the RCN archive with 50 shortlisted entries forming a touring exhibition. Submit your pictures before the deadline of 29 February at [www.rcn100photo.org.uk](http://www.rcn100photo.org.uk)

### Historic student pay protest shows little has changed

When the NHS came into being in 1948, many student nurses were shocked to find their first pay packet from their new employer left them 10 shillings a month worse off. This caused an uproar and a public march was held from Trafalgar Square to Hyde Park in August of that year.



## Ros recognised for exceptional member support

The RCN Staff Awards for Excellence 2015 celebrated the outstanding contribution of College staff in supporting members and representatives.

Ros Shaw, a senior RCN officer in Scotland, won the prestigious Members' Award for Outstanding Customer Service. She was nominated by steward Vicky Anderson.

The awards are made possible thanks to the support of external sponsors, with the members' award proudly sponsored by Medisa: [www.medisa.com](http://www.medisa.com)

## RCN Foundation offers financial help to flood victims in need

Members who've been affected by floods in Scotland and northern England could get financial help from the RCN Foundation Benevolent Fund. It provides vital support to nursing team members who need assistance in getting their lives back on track in challenging times.

To see if you're eligible call 020 7647 3882 or email [renfoundation@rcn.org.uk](mailto:renfoundation@rcn.org.uk). The charity relies on donations to provide support to nurses, midwives and health care assistants. Visit [www.justgiving.com/renfoundation](http://www.justgiving.com/renfoundation) to contribute.

## THE VIEW FROM HERE



**Kat Barber**  
Nursing student

I started an online petition after I heard rumours that the student bursary was going to be cut. By the time George Osborne began announcing his plans it had hit 100,000 signatures and was being considered for debate in parliament.

I think it showed the strength of feeling on the issue. Nurses have been done over for some time now and this was a step too far.

The plans are disgraceful. On the basis that student nurses would be paying £9,000 a year in tuition fees, I've worked out that we'd be paying £12 per hour to complete the required practice hours.

We're classed as supernumerary but that's a farce. We are part of the nursing team and we do work.

Jeremy Hunt has admitted that student nurse training places should never have been slashed so making future generations of nursing students pay for that mistake is unacceptable.

I understand that cuts need to be made to fund direct patient care, but why can't we be paid a small sum for the shifts we work?

It is clear from the outcome of the junior doctors' dispute that the health secretary is not a man open to negotiation so we need to make the most of what we can influence.

We must fight hard to be heard.



**Nursing staff are the backbone of the NHS, but too often they are not given a say in the big decisions**

For example, Stephanie McCarthy, Clinical Procurement Nurse Specialist at Derby NHS Foundation Trust, organised a clinical swap shop, saving thousands of pounds in the process, and Alison Hopkins, Lead Nurse for the Wound and Lymphoedema Service in Tower Hamlets Primary Care Trust, built a business case for a new off-prescription route for dressings saving £600,000 over a four-year period.

Get inspired and find out how to make a difference at [www.rcn.org.uk/smallchanges](http://www.rcn.org.uk/smallchanges)

## Buy your way to a more efficient future

Could 2016 be the year that you help the NHS save millions through effective purchasing?

In 2011, the National Audit Office identified the potential for £500 million worth of savings if organisations within the NHS embraced more efficient purchasing.

The *Small Changes, Big Differences* campaign, launched last year and run by the RCN, NHS Supply Chain and the Clinical Procurement Specialist Network, supports senior nursing leaders with resources to engage their nursing staff in procurement.

Nursing staff have unparalleled knowledge and experience with clinical products and can influence how their trust spends money at the same time as providing safer care.

Janet Davies, RCN Chief Executive, said: "Nursing staff know better than anyone which products work well and which don't, so involving them in procurement decisions is good for patient care."

The campaign highlights inspiring stories of nurses who have saved their trusts money, reduced waste and improved care quality.

[www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts](http://www.rcn.org.uk/nursingcounts)



# 6 OPINION

## WHAT I'M THINKING



### Ben Padfield

Clinical Lead for Unregistered Practitioner Development

I have mixed feelings about the introduction of nursing associates. Though the role will offer career development opportunities for health care assistants (HCAs), there are so many questions that remain unanswered.

When Lord Willis suggested there should be a role that bridges the gap between registered nurses and HCAs in his *Shape of Caring* review last year, he indicated that it should be at band three. If that's the case, and this new role is his recommendation brought to life, then I struggle to understand how it will be different from the role of a band three HCA.

An advanced training route, perhaps using a higher apprenticeship framework, would enable nursing associates to undertake more technical clinical tasks, but then there would be a strong case for regulation.

Reports of failures in compassionate care have taught us that our commitment to improving levels of skill, respect and dignity needs to be relentless. Since the nursing associate role looks as if it will be unregulated, will this not increase the drift of core nursing skills from registered nurses to unregistered practitioners?

It's also unclear how the role will be applied to different settings and how employers will decide how many of each role they need. I look forward to the consultation.

[www.rcn.org.uk/hca](http://www.rcn.org.uk/hca)



## What you've been saying

### Seek support in times of need

Recently I was off work for a long time due to illness. I needed surgery and now ongoing treatment but the outlook is positive.

When things get tough, it can sometimes feel very lonely. I joined the RCN Peer Support Group and have received advice from members who've gone through similar things.

As a nursing and caring profession, it is important to support each other, so we're able to look after our patients, families and friends better. It's good to know that help is available when needed.

✉ Andy Shum, by email

### Student bursary cut backlash

Nursing could become a degree for the rich. Without my bursary, I wouldn't have made it through the past two years. I can't just expect my partner to pay for everything, it would financially break us.

✉ Jenni Stewart, on Facebook

Without the bursary I would not have been able to pursue a career in nursing, a career that is close to my heart, runs in my family, and is something I wanted to do my whole life. I love being a nurse, but I couldn't do it without this help.

✉ Annie Rouge, on Facebook



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

Somewhere, a nurse is doing something seemingly insignificant that is having a profound impact on someone's life. #nursingcounts

Stuart Young, registered nurse and NHS flu fighter

### I'VE BEEN READING...

*Letters from Belsen 1945: An Australian Nurse's Experience with the Survivors of War* by Muriel Knox Doherty is a fascinating account of nursing in a former concentration camp. It comprises letters sent by the director of nursing to her Australian friends and family. Both heartbreaking and uplifting, it's a brilliant account of nursing refugees, holocaust survivors and displaced persons following the fall of Germany.

Anna Semmens, RCN Library and Archive Services Manager  
Read more at [www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100](http://www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100)



### 3 THINGS I BELIEVE

1. The RCN's centenary year will be an amazing celebration of what we've achieved.
2. You don't get to 100 without learning some valuable lessons.
3. We can use what we've learned to meet the challenges of our future.

Roy Tomlinson, RCN Centenary Board Member

### Got something to say?

The RCN Bulletin team is always looking for members to contribute to the opinion pages. If you're keen to share your views, email [bulletin@rcn.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@rcn.org.uk)

## HOT TOPIC



### How would you like to see nursing change in the next 100 years?

Clinical Services Director **Jason Warriner** says: "I would like to see nursing using more technology to enable people to live at home and access care and support that gives them choice and still has a human touch. All nurses will see public health as a key part of their role to ensure people remain healthy."

**Zeba Arif**, Chair of the RCN Forensic Nursing Forum, says: "I think it has to be recognised that nurses are human beings caring for human beings so their need for breaks, food and drink has to be part of their working day."

"I would like to see nursing fully realise its role at the centre of the application

of technology in health care," says **Matt Butler**, RCN eHealth Forum Committee Member. "I see nurses in future really taking the lead in new technologies – their design and implementation – for the benefit of patients and the population in general."

Clinical support worker **Brian Murphy** says: "I would like the nursing family to be working more cohesively together with no divides caused by bands or pay grades. I would like us all to be valued for our role in the delivery of patient care."

Staff nurse **Donato Tallo** adds: "I would like to see the nursing profession held in higher regard by members of the general public. I would like to see a range of technological advances that allow nurses to spend more time with patients and deliver high quality and compassionate care."

## MESSAGE TO MEMBERS



**Janet Davies**  
RCN Chief Executive

One hundred years ago, a small group of very determined people founded what would one day become the largest professional nursing union in the world – the Royal College of Nursing.

In the days before women had the vote, they managed to lobby parliament and secure professional registration for nurses. It's a remarkable story and one we can't wait to share with you in 2016.

But our centenary is also a time to consider how far our profession has come in 100 years, and the way in which nursing staff, like you, have led the way in revolutionising patient care. Together we are shaping nursing. Your feedback has enabled us to influence the Nursing and Midwifery Council's revalidation model and we will continue to make sure the process works.

Looking ahead, we will be examining plans for a nursing associate role and negotiating to make sure changes to student nurse funding don't drive would-be nurses away.

Of course, 2016 is also the year we will continue to provide opportunities for nursing staff to learn. We will carry on the legacy of our forebearers by campaigning for fair pay, and for our nurses and health care assistants to be recognised for their efforts.

We have quite a year ahead – but then we've always liked a challenge.



## We've come a long way – let's go further

**Cecilia Anim**  
RCN President

Nursing has progressed so much over the last 100 years. No longer do we simply assist doctors; we are professionals in our own right, working autonomously, taking on leadership roles and performing complex clinical procedures.

We have worked so hard to improve patient care and the RCN has played a crucial role in shaping health policies, improving education, building healthy workplaces and supporting members on the frontline.

Now I want the College to grow even stronger by empowering more members to take the lead in influencing care delivery. But we must also see greater investment in the profession, with nursing staff valued by being paid a fair wage and given opportunities to develop in work time.

We have always been guided by the principle that if you get it right for nurses, you get it right for patients. Let's start the next 100 years by living that mantra. Help us to help you by getting involved with the RCN. Imagine what could be achieved if we all stood together.

[www.rcn.org.uk](http://www.rcn.org.uk)



# 8 FEATURES

## 100 years young

As the RCN opens an exhibition to celebrate 100 years since its inception, *RCN Bulletin* speaks to members about some of the key moments in the College's history



As an RCN member you're not only the lifeblood of the RCN, you're also part of a unique piece of nursing history. So how did it all begin?

During the First World War there was a hugely increased demand for nurses. At this time nurse training was unregulated and any hospital could establish a training school and set its own curriculum. The lack of standardised training meant there was a lot of uncertainty about the future of nursing and many nurses were concerned for their profession.

Sarah Swift, Matron in Chief of the British Red Cross, decided to take action, and in February 1916, joined forces with politician Arthur Stanley to propose a College for Nurses. It was a shrewd move to make the demand during wartime when nurses had the full support of a grateful nation. By March of the same year the College of Nursing Ltd had been

incorporated and placed under the direction of a College council.

### Early mission statement

Education and training were at the heart of its activities but it had other important goals too: to speak up for nurses to protect their interests and wellbeing and to provide nursing with professional status through registration.

**“The biggest change is that it now represents nursing as a whole”**

Since that February day in Pall Mall, the RCN has evolved year after year, continuing to play a key role in nursing education, in influencing political decision making, fighting for members' pay and conditions (formally becoming a trade union in 1977), championing excellent

patient care and representing the diversity of the profession.

Mary Good is 101 years old and one of the RCN's longest-serving members. She qualified in 1942, joining the RCN the same year, because "it's the thing that a professional nurse should really do".

Reflecting on how the RCN has changed over the course of her membership, Mary says: "The biggest change is that it now represents nursing as a whole, whereas before it was quite a small organisation just representing women and mostly from the big training hospitals."

Unlike the Royal Colleges of Medicine, founded by and for men, the RCN was initially founded for women, and despite the key role of men on the council, male nurses couldn't join the College until 1960. Council member Gordon Lees, one of the RCN's longest-serving activists, who joined in

“

The support of the RCN has made me feel like I'm part of the bigger picture

Be part of the celebrations. There's a range of activities taking place throughout the year from a photography competition to an international conference. Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100](http://www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100) to find out more.

## KEY DATES



1975, says this change to membership was instrumental in encouraging more men to join the profession.

### **“Men have brought a range of qualities to nursing”**

“When I was training to be a nurse in Hartlepool, I was one of three men on my training course. I think it’s fair to say that some male nurses encountered a degree of prejudice, even when I qualified in the 1970s. Nowadays I don’t feel that there is such prejudice, and I believe the work of the RCN has gone a long way to helping with that.

“Men have brought a range of qualities to the profession. History has proved that we can give good care and have a positive influence on standards.”

### **Embracing the nursing family**

Over time the College has become more inclusive, and in 2001 health care assistants (HCAs) were admitted into membership for the first time – an acknowledgement of their vital role in the nursing family and in nursing care. Daphne Regan was one of the first HCAs to join the RCN when she became a member on 31 May 2001. When she heard membership was extended to support workers she was quick to apply, recognising the value of being part of the UK’s biggest nursing trade union and professional organisation.

“When you’re not a registered nurse, it is easy to feel isolated, so the support of the RCN has made me feel like I’m part of the bigger picture. I am pleased to know that the voice of HCAs is being represented in the RCN’s centenary celebrations.”

Today the RCN is a diverse nursing community where equality, human rights and inclusion are fundamental to nursing care.

With an ever-expanding membership of 430,000 all across the UK, the RCN is uniquely acknowledged as the voice of nursing by both the Government and the public.

Here’s to another 100 years.

### **The voice of nursing**

To learn more about the RCN’s rich history visit the RCN centenary exhibition: *The Voice of Nursing* at the RCN Library and Heritage Centre in London. With stories from nurses themselves and items from the RCN’s collections, discover how the College has developed from a small professional women’s organisation to what it is today. To find out more and view a brief film charting the organisation’s progress, visit the website below.

[www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100](http://www.rcn.org.uk/RCN100)

- 1916** The College of Nursing Ltd is founded with 34 members and Mary S Rundle as Secretary.
- 1919** Following a successful College of Nursing campaign, the Nurses’ Act is passed establishing a register for nurses for the first time. The College receives the Nation’s Fund for Nurses endowment.
- 1920** The College badge is introduced. A quarterly *College Bulletin* is published.
- 1928** The Royal Charter is granted to the College. The College of Nursing Ltd becomes the College of Nursing.
- 1939** George VI grants the title “Royal” to the College, which now has 30,000 members. The College badge is redesigned. The War Emergency Committee is established for the duration of WW2.
- 1960** Membership is opened up to all registered nurses including men.
- 1968** Membership is opened up to nursing students.
- 1976** The RCN votes to become a trade union. The first RCN fellowships (FRCN) are awarded. Membership centres are re-organised to match NHS boundaries. A new title is adopted – Royal College of Nursing of the UK (RCN).
- 1992** Nurse prescribing becomes law following a concerted RCN campaign.
- 1995** The RCN changes its rules to allow industrial action which does not harm patients.
- 2001** Health care assistants are admitted into membership for the first time.
- 2010** The RCN ceases to be a charity and the independent RCN Foundation is set up.

# 10 FEATURES

## Getting ready for revalidation



Are you prepared for the biggest change to nursing and midwifery regulation in the NMC's history?

Nearly 16,000 nurses and midwives are expected to go through revalidation when the new system launches this April, but from then onwards all 685,000 Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) registrants will have to revalidate in order to maintain their registration.

Revalidation will replace the current system of post-registration education and practice (PREP) and will be a process which NMC registrants must undertake every three years to demonstrate that they practise safely to renew their NMC registration. The process

encourages nurses and midwives to reflect on the role of the NMC Code in their practice and demonstrate that they are “living” the standards set out within it.

### In brief

To revalidate, nurses and midwives will be required to collect evidence of the following:

- 450 hours of practice
- 35 hours of continuing professional development
- five pieces of practice-related feedback
- five written reflective accounts
- reflective discussion with

- another NMC registrant
- a declaration about their health and character
  - a professional indemnity arrangement
  - a form signed by a confirmor.

The RCN has worked with the NMC to help shape the revalidation model and it has been tested in 19 sites across the UK.

RCN members involved in one of the revalidation pilot sites, Central Manchester Foundation Trust (CMFT), share their experiences of the process.



**My advice is to register with NMC Online as it tells you when you are due to re-register**



### **I enjoyed thinking about the feedback**

“With the feedback section, I was concerned it would be a bigger process than it was, and you would have to give a family a questionnaire or something similar, but that isn’t the case, and in reality you get feedback from family members all the time.

“I used a variety of feedback – some structured leadership programme feedback from five colleagues and also some from a health care assistant about my communication with her. Looking at the feedback and the reflections together has helped with my work.

“I enjoyed thinking about the feedback and wrote mini-reflections on these. I then cross-referenced these to the Code.”

**Vicki Robinson**  
Children’s community sister

**'It makes you think about things in a more structured way'**



"I thought the reflection process would be like going back to university with 3,000 word essays and references, but in reality it was just writing something short on something you have done."

"Revalidation makes you reflect and think about things in a more structured way. There is always new learning out there and, as it is part of revalidation to show what you have done, it makes you make more time for this."

"My advice for other people is to register with NMC Online as it tells you when you are due to re-register (complete the online revalidation application) and tells you how to go through the process. Also, find a buddy to help you through it."

#### **Indy Mohammed**

Revalidation facilitator

## **'It's not as scary as you think'**

"The revalidation process was not as hard as I thought it was going to be, and I think at the most I spent eight hours on it. I'm sure no-one would have a problem with getting the practice hours – you could easily do the hours in a year!"

"My advice is to read through the guidance to prepare for revalidation and keep notes and records of what you have done. When

you first look at the paperwork it might take you back a bit, but it's not as scary as you think. Make sure you are organised and that you can put your hand on your certificates and know what professional development you have done. It's quite easy to then reflect."

#### **Linda Missen**

Midwife

## **'Revalidation is not an arduous job'**

"The confirmer is there to confirm if a nurse fulfils the revalidation requirements set by the NMC, but it may expose other things. We would take these up as a separate process – they would be followed up and managed separately according to your trust policies. If the criteria is met, we can still revalidate."

"My top tips would be to photocopy the confirmation form of who you are confirming for your own records, also in case the NMC asks you to verify that you did provide confirmation for someone. Make sure you give enough time for the process and if you are stuck in terms of whether or not to confirm someone, always seek advice."



"Revalidation is not an arduous job and we do not want people to be upset or too concerned about it. It's things nurses will be doing already – but it's just making sure you have a formal record of it."

#### **Denise Jonas**

Matron for education and staff development, and a confirmer for the revalidation process

## **Time to prepare**

Visit the NMC website at [www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation](http://www.nmc.org.uk/revalidation) to read more about revalidation. Register for an NMC Online account at [www.nmc.org.uk/nmc-online](http://www.nmc.org.uk/nmc-online) to find out when you are due to revalidate.

Get more RCN advice and information at [www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation](http://www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation). You might

also want to consider signing up for RCNi's online portfolio, enabling you to log evidence of continuing professional development, practice hours and reflective accounts. Visit [www.rcni.com/portfolio](http://www.rcni.com/portfolio)

The RCN is keen to hear from members who are going through revalidation for the first time. If you are due to revalidate between April and August 2016, please get in touch. Contact [policycontacts@rcn.org.uk](mailto:policycontacts@rcn.org.uk)

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For TextDirect: first dial 18001. Calls may be recorded. Mon-Fri 8am-9pm, Sat 8am-5pm, Sun 9am-5pm. Pet: Mon-Fri 8am-8pm, Sat 9am-5pm.

\*10% of new RCN customers paid £172 or less between 01/09/2015 to 30/11/2015. †10% of new RCN customers paid £98 or less for buildings and contents between 01/09/2015 to 30/11/2015. The Royal College of Nursing acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance. 3787-2015.

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# Rewarding representatives

The RCN's passionate and committed representatives work tirelessly to support members and improve working conditions for nursing staff. Now's your chance to recognise those who have gone the extra mile

At RCN Congress in Glasgow in June the prestigious RCN Awards will be presented to exceptional representatives who have gone above and beyond to support members.

The awards credit nursing staff who voluntarily take on trade union roles, often working after hours, to help resolve disputes and bring about positive changes for members in the workplace.

They might have improved health and safety, introduced a new learning initiative or successfully represented a member. If you've witnessed, managed or been personally supported by an exceptional representative, then why not let them know how much they're valued by nominating them for an RCN representative of the year award?

## Be the difference

Being nominated for, or even winning, one of the awards can make a real difference to reps' careers and demonstrate how valuable they are to the ongoing success of the RCN.

"Winning the award has increased my confidence and made me realise that I am providing a good service to members, even when cases don't go as I would like," says Steward of the Year Anne Rouse. "It has made me feel that the work activists carry out is very much recognised and important to the organisation."

Anne was nominated by fellow activist Phil Noyes, who describes her as "an example



*Anne is pictured on the right alongside RCN President Cecilia Anim and Chair of RCN Council Michael Brown*



**This shows how effective a determined and capable representative can be even when it seems they are fighting a losing cause**

of how effective a determined and capable representative can be even when it seems they are fighting a losing cause".

Anne helped secure a successful outcome for a member involved in a highly complex case. At no stage was the outcome certain and Anne worked extensively on case papers in her own time.

"Winning became a mission for me," she says. "I was driven by the unfairness of it all. The member should never have had to face what they went through and I was determined to get them a good result."

Awards are available in each of the three representative categories – steward, learning rep and safety rep – and both nurse and health care assistant members are eligible for nomination.

Clinical support worker Brian Murphy was crowned RCN Safety Representative of the Year in 2014.

He was nominated for helping reduce needlestick injuries within his organisation, by introducing safety devices and decreasing the risk of blood borne virus exposure to staff, patients and visitors.

"I was so chuffed to win," he says. "The award has really opened doors for me and it was a massive boost to my confidence. It's not what I get out of it, it's the difference I can make to improving members' working lives and the lives of the patients they care for."

## Find out more

Members who nominate an award winner will receive £100. For more information and to complete a nomination form go to [www.rcn.org.uk/renawards](http://www.rcn.org.uk/renawards) or email [governance.support@rcn.org.uk](mailto:governance.support@rcn.org.uk). The deadline for nominations is 1 April. The awards are sponsored by Liverpool Victoria.

## Time for a change

RCN member Michelle Gorman is passionate about allowing nurses in Scotland to work as forensic examiners, something they're currently prevented from doing under Scottish law



Michelle, a qualified nurse for 15 years, works as an on-call support nurse for the only sexual assault referral centre in Scotland. It's her job to assist the forensic medical examiner when dealing with somebody who's been a victim of sexual assault or rape.

In England, forensic nurse examiners carry out sexual assault examinations, but under Scottish law nurses are limited to the role of assistant and are prevented from performing examinations themselves. This is because of a unique requirement in Scottish law which means there must be two separate sources of evidence for a criminal case, such as rape, before it can proceed to trial. This is called corroboration.

The reason nurses in Scotland cannot be forensic examiners is mainly because a doctor could refute the findings of the nurse. Therefore, this role is usually performed by a doctor or forensic

medical examiner to avoid the evidence being dismissed, or not corroborated.

### Taking control

Michelle decided to train to become a forensic nurse examiner in England and self-funded her post-graduate certificate. Now, thanks to funding from the RCN Foundation, she is studying a post-graduate diploma in advanced forensic practice.

Michelle feels it's time for the law to change to allow nurses in Scotland to be forensic examiners.

She says: "It's a service I feel incredibly passionate about and at the moment it is not something we are able to offer 24/7 for people in Scotland who have been raped or sexually assaulted.

"Instead, when our referral centre is unavailable, either through staff shortage or it being in use

for another case, victims may be examined in a police station, which does not provide the same level of privacy, anonymity, calmness and cleanliness."

### Under review

Jess Davidson, a committee member of the RCN's Nursing in Criminal Justice Services Forum, is a senior clinical forensic charge nurse for NHS Lothian and part of a clinical group reviewing current practice in this area.

She says: "We are working to remove professional barriers to undertaking this work, but there needs to be an infrastructure in place to train nurses to become forensic examiners. It's not just a simple case of 'yes' or 'no'.

"There seems to be no reason why suitably qualified and experienced nurses can't do this job, especially with precedent in the rest of the UK and other countries."

### Get involved

Do you work in criminal justice settings? Would you like to? Would you value the knowledge and support of nursing staff who specialise in this area? Why not join the RCN Nursing in Criminal Justice Services Forum?

Visit [www.rcn.co.uk/forums](http://www.rcn.co.uk/forums) to find out more.



There needs to be an infrastructure in place to train nurses to become forensic examiners

④ To find out about the financial support available from the RCN Foundation visit [www.rcnfound.org.uk](http://www.rcnfound.org.uk)

## How the RCN works with NICE

Working with the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) is a big part of the RCN forums' work.

Two recently published resources explain how the College engages with NICE, including the development of clinical, public health and social care guidelines and quality standards. Members can download *RCN Involvement in National*

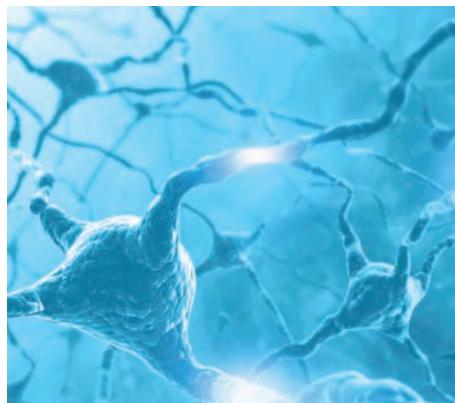
*Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) Guidance* (leaflet) and *The RCN and NICE* (information card) from [www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/professional-development/publications).

The resources explore the benefits of helping shape clinical guidance and explain how members can get involved in this work.

## Resources to support better care of people with MND

Members of the RCN Neuroscience Forum are developing online tools for nursing staff caring for people with motor neurone disease (MND).

Forum Chair Dr Sue Woodward said: "Over the last year we've delivered three public lectures with the MND Association at RCN headquarters attended by nurses from a range of clinical backgrounds. Now we are developing an e-learning package that will be available on the RCN website and hopefully launched at RCN Congress in Glasgow in June."



## Forum helps develop surgical safety standards to prevent 'never events'

The RCN Perioperative Forum has been involved in developing a new set of national standards to help hospitals provide safer surgical procedures.

The aim of NHS England's National Standards for Invasive Procedures (NatSSIPs) is to reduce the number of surgical "never events" – serious incidents that are wholly preventable if the available guidance and recommendations are followed.

For more information visit  
<http://tinyurl.com/hnl5a9g>

## Flight nurses urged to share best practice

The call for posters is now open for this year's RCN flight nursing workshop.

Hosted by the RCN Critical Care and In-flight Forum, this one-day event will explore recent advances in flight nursing, showcase best practice and share the latest research. It will be relevant to flight nurses of all grades and sectors.

The deadline for posters is midnight on 5 February and the workshop is on 23 April at RCN headquarters in London.

For more information visit  
[www.rcn.org.uk/F16](http://www.rcn.org.uk/F16)

## WHAT I'M THINKING



**Jennie Deeks**

RCN Women's Health Forum

Thanks to legislation set out by the EU, women in the UK pay a five per cent levy on tampons and sanitary towels, dubbed the "tampon tax".

Obviously the European Parliament doesn't think it's enough to suffer the inconvenience – and often the indignity – of being burdened with menstrual cycles, classing sanitary products as "non-essential luxury items".

Those making this decision should be placed in a room full of women who have endured heavy menstrual bleeding for any length of time, some of whom will have had emergency surgery as a result, and try to convince them that these products are "non-essential" and "luxury".

MPs recently voted against a move to challenge the EU on the amount of tax British women pay on these items.

Some women suffer such heavy bleeding that they are using more than two packs of these items daily.

If male MPs were to suffer bleeding on this scale on a monthly basis I'm sure they wouldn't be so quick to resign themselves to defeat.

Maybe no-one is fighting for European women, but we need to fight for our UK patients.

[www.rcn.org.uk/forums](http://www.rcn.org.uk/forums)



# 16 EVENTS

For details of more events visit the region and country pages of the RCN website or go to [www.rcn.org.uk/events](http://www.rcn.org.uk/events)

## Research

### RCN international nursing research conference

**6-8 April**

Edinburgh International Conference Centre  
150 Morrison Street  
Edinburgh EH3 8EE

This is the leading conference for those involved in or interested in research relevant to nursing.

Delegates come from diverse clinical and academic settings from around the world to share work on a broad range of topics and methods, to learn and to network.

Conference themes include, but are not limited to, clinical effectiveness, instrument development, evaluation of

change, methodology, health policy and patient experience.

There will also be events aimed at clinical nurse researchers, early career researchers and PhD students, including career advice sessions.

Michael Traynor, Chair of the conference scientific committee, is particularly keen to encourage first-time attendees.

He says: "The conference has a friendly and inclusive atmosphere, whether you come to meet others or to deliver a paper and get constructive feedback. Please consider coming along. Submissions of late, breaking abstracts are welcome until 31 January. Hope to see you in Edinburgh."

◎ Details at [www.rcn.org.uk/research2016](http://www.rcn.org.uk/research2016)



## LGBT history

### Loud and proud

**17 February**

RCN headquarters  
20 Cavendish Square  
London W1G ORN

This evening event to mark LGBT History Month will explore the history of the RCN's involvement in promoting lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender (LGBT) rights. Main speaker, human rights activist Peter Tatchell, will tell the little-known story of his hunt for the doctor who experimented on gay concentration camp prisoners and escaped justice.

◎ Details at [www.rcn.org.uk/library](http://www.rcn.org.uk/library)

## CYP nursing

### Young people's health study day

**28 January**

Education Centre Lecture Theatre  
Royal Derby Hospital  
Derby DE22 3NE

This free event is for nursing staff interested in care aimed at promoting positive physical, mental and emotional health and wellbeing in all children and young people.

It is being organised in association with the RCN Derbyshire Branch and the RCN Children and Young People Staying Healthy Forum. Please book your place as soon as possible if you want to attend.

The programme for the day includes adolescent mental health, play therapy, child sexual exploitation and involving young people in health.

Organiser Nina Heighington says the day will be relevant to acute and community nurses from all branches.

"Due to advances in medicine, more young people are growing up with chronic illnesses and transitioning to adult services.

"Young people are also increasingly presenting at hospitals with mental health problems, or comorbidities associated with mental health. Caring for young people is now a large part of every nurse's role."

◎ Email [nina.heighington@nhs.net](mailto:nina.heighington@nhs.net)