



**RCN  
BULLETIN**



Royal College  
of Nursing

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P12 FEATURE

**NURSING IN ZAMBIA**  
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**IDENTIFYING DELIRIUM**  
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ISSUE NO. 355 SEPTEMBER 2017

# PASSPORT TO SUCCESS

ANGELA'S KEEPING PATIENTS AND CARERS TOGETHER

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

**Editor:** Sarah Abley  
**Editorial:** 020 7647 3775  
**Email:** [bulletin@rcn.org.uk](mailto:bulletin@rcn.org.uk)  
**Web:** [www.rcn.org.uk/bulletin](http://www.rcn.org.uk/bulletin)  
**Address:** 20 Cavendish Square, London W1G 0RN  
**Classified advertising**  
**Tel:** 020 8423 1333  
**Fax:** 020 8423 4382  
**Email:** [advertising@rcni.com](mailto:advertising@rcni.com)

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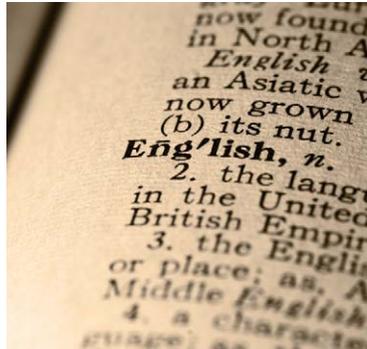
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## Standards for English

The RCN is asking members to share their experience or knowledge of the International English Language Test (IELTS) by contributing to a short survey.

The research comes in response to a Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) review of the test and concerns that the present system is preventing too many qualified nurses from being recruited into the UK's health and social care system.

By taking part in the survey, members will shape the College's formal language-testing recommendation to the NMC. The survey is now open and will close on Sunday 10 September. Visit [www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CNGME](http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CNGME) to take part.

## Update your details

Make sure your details are correct on the RCN database to ensure you receive the most recent news and information.

You can also make sure you receive all the relevant news by adding an email address too.

Visit: [www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn](http://www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn)  
Phone: 0345 7726 100  
Email: [membership@rcn.org.uk](mailto:membership@rcn.org.uk)

## Election deadlines

Don't miss your chance to vote for your chosen representatives on the new RCN Trade Union and Professional Nursing committees.

Candidate profiles for the Trade Union Committee election are already online and voting is open until 4 October. Members will have received voting emails from election organisers ERS, or you can visit [www.ersvotes.com/rentuc17](http://www.ersvotes.com/rentuc17) to cast your vote (your RCN membership number is required to log on).

Candidates for the Professional Nursing Committee will be published on 12 September at [www.ersvotes.com/rcnnp17](http://www.ersvotes.com/rcnnp17)

Nominations are also open for the National Pensioners Convention (NPC). Four members are needed to sit on the NPC Council, including one member to sit on its executive committee. Find out more at [www.rcn.org.uk/elections](http://www.rcn.org.uk/elections)

This page also has details for applications to stand for the RCN International Committee. Keep visiting the page to stay up-to-date with all RCN elections and learn more about what the roles entail.



Get involved in RCN elections [www.rcn.org.uk/elections](http://www.rcn.org.uk/elections)



## Belfast 2018

RCN Congress is taking place in Belfast from 12-16 May. You can register your interest at [www.rcn.org.uk/congress](http://www.rcn.org.uk/congress), where you can also learn more about what happens at the event. If you're travelling independently, most airlines' May flights are now open for booking, so why not get in early and grab a bargain?



## Digital demo

More than two million people were made aware of the RCN's Scrap the Cap campaign thanks to a digital day of action on 25 August.

Members and supporters tweeted, posted on Facebook and generally flooded social media with #scrapthecap.

In just one day, more than 600 people signed up to a Twitter thunderclap, which schedules individual tweets to post at the same time. This time the tweets were set to publish as our Scrap the Cap rally in Parliament Square kicked off.

Supporters also made the most of the tweet your MP tool, ensuring that politicians are getting the message that the pay cap cannot continue. Members can keep contacting MPs via the RCN website and complete postcards to MPs until the end of this month.

Hundreds of members also shared their own stories, giving a personal perspective to the daily hardships that nursing staff face. Turn to page 7 to read some of the comments shared on the day.

Outside the virtual arena, members and supporters are still out and about across the UK. Recent activity includes a demonstration in Newcastle and pay champions across all four countries spreading the word through workplaces.

The RCN will continue to visit workplaces across the UK. To find out if someone will be in your area visit [www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap](http://www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap). You'll also be able to find out more about what you can do to support the campaign.

## Summer of Protest reaches climax

As *RCN Bulletin* goes to print thousands of members are preparing to join our protest rally in Parliament Square, London. But what's next for the Scrap the Cap campaign?



Over the past few months members and campaign supporters have staged demonstrations across the UK urging the Government to scrap the 1% public sector pay cap. The Blackpool Tower has been lit up in support; doves have been released at Florence Nightingale's graveside; placards have been waved at Downing Street; political leaders have worn our badges; members have taken their local MPs to task at surgeries; and thousands have filled in postcards to urge politicians to rethink the cap.

RCN Chair of Council Michael Brown explains: "It's important that we continue to keep pressure on the Government and do everything we can to secure the announcement we want to hear in the autumn Budget.

"The Chancellor cannot continue to ignore the strength of feeling

demonstrated by our members this summer. The drop in applications to study nursing at university, the massive vacancies in the NHS and the fact that more nurses are leaving the profession than joining it can all be traced back to poor pay. Nursing and safe patient care will not be able to bear the strain of continued devaluation."

In the coming months the RCN will be targeting local MPs with the thousands of postcards, completed by supporters, which urge politicians to call on the Chancellor to scrap the cap.

Members should also check the College has their correct details (see page 2) as, should a ballot be called, it is legally required to be carried out by post. New legislation also states that at least 50% of those eligible to vote must take part in the ballot for the result to be recognised.

# 4 DOING THE ROUNDS

## World class opportunity



RCN members were runners of a different kind at this year's World Para-athletics Championships in London. Working as event volunteers (known as runners), RCN stewards Mike Smith and Penny Mannings were on hand to support the games' medical service.

The vibrantly uniformed and multi-skilled medical team is drawn from right across the UK and includes nurses, doctors, physios, sports therapists, radiographers and first aiders.

Led by registered nurse Dr Pamela Venning, they're responsible for the wellbeing of everyone at the venue.

Mike, who was stationed in the medal ceremony area, explains: "We used our skills to look after athletes, sports officials, the media, visitors and other volunteers.

"A few people knew members of the team already, but I hadn't met my colleagues before. We gelled very quickly because many of us

had common interests and had volunteered for similar events in the past."

One of 15,000 applicants for just 4,000 runner positions, the experience isn't one Mike will forget easily. "Meeting some of the athletes, hearing the incredible stories of what they had to overcome and seeing their achievements, which in many cases surpassed more able bodied athletes, was amazing," he says.

And Penny agrees: "I feel privileged to be chosen to represent our profession at these championships."



I feel privileged to be chosen to represent our profession

The RCN indemnity scheme will generally cover members who work in a voluntary capacity (subject to conditions and exclusions). This includes work undertaken overseas, with the exception of the USA and Canada. Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/indemnity](http://www.rcn.org.uk/indemnity) to find out more.

## Service excellence

The RCN's Library and Archives Service offers a wide range of support and resources, and after being awarded Customer Service Excellence accreditation, members can be sure of receiving the best quality help in accessing online and printed information.

The new award comes just weeks after the service celebrated achieving industry accreditation for the RCN archives – one of just 70 UK archives to do so.

To learn more about making the most of our library services, visit [www.rcn.org.uk/library](http://www.rcn.org.uk/library)

## E-approved

NHS Digital has endorsed the RCN's campaign "Every nurse an e-nurse", and pledged to play a supporting role in realising the campaign's ambition.

Janet Davies, RCN Chief Executive, said: "Technology and data are transforming health care, presenting huge opportunities to improve treatment, patient safety and wellbeing. It's vital that nurses have the skills they need to make the most of these opportunities."

Discover more about ehealth at [www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/ehealth](http://www.rcn.org.uk/clinical-topics/ehealth)



## The big picture



Members release doves at a Scrap the Cap vigil by Florence Nightingale's grave in West Wellow, Hampshire. Find out more about Scrap the Cap at [www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap](http://www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap)

### MEET THE MEMBER



Each month *RCN Bulletin* asks a member to share a little bit about themselves.

**Name:** Jacqueline Green

**Details:** Black Country branch

**Describe your job in three words:**

I'd say, caring, compassionate and enjoyable. And if I was allowed an extra, rewarding.

**If you weren't a nurse, what would you be?** I always wanted to be a nurse, but I used to work in housing for homeless people.

**What item can't you do without at work?** Comfortable shoes – I do a lot of walking

**Who would play you in a film?** Angelina Jolie

**How do you unwind?** I like to bake

**If you could have a superpower what would it be?** Flying would be great.

**What three things would you take with you to a desert island?** Seeds for plants that flourish in the heat. A camel for milk and meat. And a tent for shelter.

**If you could go back in time, which year would you live in?** 1984. I had not long left school and had no worries.

**Where is your dream holiday destination?** Either the Caribbean or Gran Canaria.

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



## PATIENT PERSPECTIVE



Following a cardiac arrest and diagnosis of cardiomyopathy in 1994, Tina Amiss and her husband's world was turned upside down

“ There was so much fear, anxiety and uncertainty about the future. I was very fortunate to be put in contact with the charity Cardiomyopathy UK where I spoke to one of their nurses. She gave me accurate and reliable information, reassurance and hope. As she had cardiomyopathy herself, she really 'got it' and was able to relate and empathise.

Emotional support when I had my ICD (implantable cardioverter defibrillator) fitted was especially beneficial. It was a period when I was very needy, but I was always given the time and listening ear that I needed.

Having given patient experience talks at medical conferences, I have been impressed by the frankness of nurses who have said they hadn't always appreciated the emotional impact on patients and how they'll integrate this into future practice.

Through the support I've received from nurses over the years, I have the knowledge needed to actively participate in my care. I can self-manage and am in control and able to cope most of the time. I also have a good quality of life. I am so very grateful to have received, and continue to receive, such excellent nursing care and am now a trustee of Cardiomyopathy UK.

Please follow our new heart campaign 'Know my heart story' on our website and social media [#MyHeartStory](https://twitter.com/MyHeartStory)

ARE YOUR MEMBERSHIP DETAILS UP TO DATE?

CHECK ONLINE AT MYRCN, CALL 0345 7726 100, OR WRITE TO RCN MEMBERSHIP TEAM, COPSE WALK, CARDIFF GATE BUSINESS PARK, CARDIFF CF23 8XG.

## THE VIEW FROM HERE



**Gill Coverdale**  
RCN Professional Lead  
for Education

Nurses and midwives are used to paying for their studies both in terms of time and money, and have to be very careful in their choice of continuing professional development (CPD) based on these factors. For many, this money is getting tighter and tighter.

Revalidation requires CPD that goes beyond mandatory and also demands 20 participatory hours. It's more vital than ever that we, the RCN, can support practitioners to be able to access CPD freely and support creative ways for participatory learning to take place.

Poor pay and pay rises that are so low they fall below inflation don't just result in monetary loss. They devalue the profession and force individual practitioners to make choices that put their families' basic needs first. Paying for professional development just doesn't come into the equation, but they must revalidate to continue practising.

This is a dreadful vicious circle. With practitioners being forced to leave a career they loved, the impact on the health service is profound. Pay does affect professional development in a major way, no doubt at all.

Visit the RCN revalidation pages for more support [www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation](http://www.rcn.org.uk/revalidation) and join in our Scrap the Cap campaign at [www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap](http://www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap)

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



## What you've been saying

There is no doubt in my mind that HCAs are an integral and vital part of any care team but with regards to Heather Strange (*What you've been saying*, August Bulletin) level 3 HCAs are not doing what ENs used to do and are not on a lot less pay. The difference between top band 3 and bottom band 5 is around £3,000. And given that RNs have to pay registration fees and source courses to revalidate, it's not a lot more given the responsibility and accountability. Until HCAs are regulated they will never be seen as a professional group and an equal part of the team. I used to be an HCA with extended skills but I would never consider myself to have equal skills to the nurses.

🗨️ Jackie Sheldon, via email

I've been in the nursing profession for 45 years and totally agree with Julie Greenacre (*What you've been saying*, August Bulletin).

She expressed my thoughts entirely, regarding the withdrawal of the NHS bursary for nurse training.

Very often nurses enter the profession at a later stage in life, not always in their teens when financially supported by parents and living at home. In this instance especially, like Julie, the bursary is an essential financial support to see them through the training period. Now the Government has withdrawn the bursary, not only will this add to the shortage of nurses, but many people, including 18 year olds, will not be able to afford to train.

I hope the Government will think again and take account of the potential consequences in 15-20 years' time when nursing vacancies are at an all-time high due to the disastrous decisions of 2017.

🗨️ Barbara Cole, via email



### QUOTE OF THE MONTH

"If we're going to win this fight, we can't just work with our friends."

RCN Chair of Council Michael Brown on getting support from all MPs to scrap the cap

### 4 THINGS TO DO IN SEPTEMBER

1. Update your details on the RCN database. This is vital if we need to ballot members for industrial action. Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn](http://www.rcn.org.uk/myrcn)
2. View the new Nursing You app to help busy nurses who are overweight lead healthier lifestyles [www.rcn.org.uk/achieving-and-maintaining-a-healthy-weight](http://www.rcn.org.uk/achieving-and-maintaining-a-healthy-weight)
3. Get in early for Congress 2018 – it's only nine months away. Make sure you're first in line for all the information for RCN Congress in Belfast next May [www.rcn.org.uk/congress](http://www.rcn.org.uk/congress)
4. Vote in the new RCN Trade Union committee elections – this committee will make decisions on behalf of all the RCN's trade union activity [www.rcn.org.uk/elections](http://www.rcn.org.uk/elections)

### 🗨️ 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



Thousands of members shared their thoughts on social media about scrapping the pay cap as the RCN hosted a digital day of action on Friday 25 August. Here are some of the responses we had:

“When the Government puts a 1% cap on nurse salaries they are telling nurses that the work they do is not valued much by society.” **Yasmin Benn, Nottinghamshire**

“I am a community Macmillan palliative care nurse and I have to supplement my wages to allow for lower mileage refunds and rising fuel costs. After 24 years as a nurse with a degree and master’s qualification, why do I not deserve a fair pay rise?” **Emma Charles, Rugby**

“We work long and unsocial hours and at the end of the month there is very little money left to show for the

hard work. I end up having to work overtime and work 50-60 hour weeks which leaves me feeling exhausted and using any time off to sleep and recover.” **Sarah Thomson, London**

“As nurses we are continuously taking on new tasks which would once have been the domain of medical staff and are only looking for a fair reward for the job we do. Ten years is far too long to sustain austerity measures and gives individuals no hope of being able to improve their standard of living.” **Lynda Turnbull, Glasgow**

“I have been nursing for 30 years, have two professional qualifications, two degrees and a very intense job as a health visitor. Health visitors’ pay doesn’t reflect the responsibility and complexity of the role. It’s time to show staff they are valued.” **Avril Shepherd, Renfrewshire**

## MESSAGE TO MEMBERS



### Janet Davies RCN Chief Executive

As Bulletin lands on your doorstep, thousands of you will be joining me outside the Houses of Parliament at our largest Scrap the Cap rally yet. I’m really pleased that Sir Tony Robinson and comedian Rob Delaney will be joining us at the event. Celebrity voices help amplify our messages to new audiences and show that people really are taking notice of our campaign. We’re grateful for their support.

But, it’s not just the big events that are important. Every week, across all four UK countries, our pay champions are walking the wards and visiting workplaces to gather support for scrapping the cap. It’s down to the hard work of individual members that we have reached so many people – nothing can replace face-to-face conversations.

In the end, the strength of our voice is down to the actions of every single member. And it’s our job to bring all those small contributions together in a chorus of discontent. So if you’re thinking “I’m just one person, how can I possibly make a difference?”, just remember, you’re not alone. You’re one of 435,000.

Thank you to everyone who has taken part so far – please keep supporting the campaign. If you haven’t yet joined in, there’s still time. Visit [www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap](http://www.rcn.org.uk/scrapthecap) to find out more.

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



## Emotional resilience



Nurse Zoe Butler created an award-winning mental health awareness project as a student that has now been rolled out to schools in north west England.

Before starting my nursing degree, I was volunteering at a youth theatre using my other passion of creative writing when someone in the group took their own life. The shock and devastation felt by everyone emphasised to me how the young people in the group had a total disconnect from mental health. I felt very passionate about making them feel more comfortable talking about mental health and reducing the stigma of discussing depression and anxiety.

Around the same time, I was working on creative writing workshops with a group of young people accessing mental health services. Combining the experiences of both groups allowed them to explore what it means to keep mentally healthy and how to access help if needed.

With funding and help from many different people and organisations, the Hot Potato project developed. The project is the stories of the young people filmed for a DVD. The personal accounts give them a voice and helped them to develop a better understanding of mental health.

The DVD has now been rolled out to schools all over Cumbria. It’s used as part of health promotion to get young people talking about mental health. My dream is that it becomes a national programme that encourages young people to open up and not feel alone when dealing with mental health and wellbeing.

# 8 FEATURES

## International relations

Tom Metcalf finds out how a collaboration between the RCN and a Zambian nursing organisation has improved patient safety and raised the profile of nurses



Staff at UTH, including Judith (left, red jacket) and Jericho (back row, brown jacket)



Staff believe they can be the agents of change

For nurses in Zambia, having to contend with power cuts and water shortages is a regular occurrence, as Professor Jane Reid, RCN member and clinical lead at Wessex Patient Safety Collaborative, explains.

“The conditions there are hugely challenging,” says Jane. “Resources are limited, so you could be without electricity or running water for eight or nine hours at a time. There are no consumables in the theatres – everything is reused – no curtains around beds and a lack of linen and drugs. When you compare it with services over here it makes you incredibly grateful for the NHS.”

Over the past two years Jane has made three trips to Zambia as

part of an ongoing collaborative project between the RCN and Zambian Union of Nurses Organisation (ZUNO). The project, which began in 2015, aims to strengthen ZUNO’s position as the voice of nursing in Zambia and develop its ability to influence nursing policy and improve practice.

A key priority was training health care staff to implement the World Health Organization (WHO) safe surgery checklist. As a former president of the Association for Perioperative Practice, Jane was perfectly placed to lead on this. Having previously spent time working in Zambia, she also had experience of working in a limited-resource environment. Despite the difficult conditions they face, she

has only praise for the Zambian staff she worked with.

“They’re really committed people,” she says. “They take great pride in what they do and



RCN Chief Executive Janet Davies and Jane Reid with Zuno officials

they embraced the training. We had some great nurse leaders and surgeon leaders who were very engaged and motivated. The porters, who are more like health care assistants in the UK, are critical to how things run in Zambian operating theatres so they were also key to the project.”

In total, 226 nurses, porters, anaesthetists, surgeons, student nurses and nurse tutors have been trained across three pilot sites – the University Teaching Hospital (UTH) in the capital Lusaka, as well as two hospitals in the city of Kabwe. On top of this, 40 safe surgery champions were selected to receive extra training so they can continue to promote the checklist and mentor staff on how to use it.

The results have been heartening: 71% of those who took part in the workshops feel there have been major improvements in teamwork, while 80% say their team now carries out the checklist more consistently and frequently. What’s more, all those involved felt patient safety has improved since the training.

“We’re now working very well as a team,” says Judith, a senior theatre superintendent at UTH. “There’s a lot of team spirit and a lot of dialogue. We now have formal meetings every week and safe surgery is an agenda item at each meeting.”

Jericho, a theatre porter and safe surgery champion, adds: “As porters, in the past

we never used to be organised, but now we know exactly what to do. We know our roles, so it has really changed us and we really appreciate it.”

Jane says that although the conditions the staff work in haven’t changed, the levels of confidence and leadership have increased significantly. “There’s a belief among the staff that they can be the agents of change,” she adds.

The hope is that by improving patient safety and interdisciplinary teamwork ZUNO will boost its credibility and profile, and be in a better position to advocate for nursing with the Zambian government. Part of the training Jane delivered involved showing staff how to collect data to present to the health ministry.

“We showed them how to audit properly, so they can note down when they run out of stock or don’t have water or electricity. They can then use this data with the ministry to demonstrate the health conditions they’re working under and make the case for improvements,” she explains.

Influencing politicians isn’t easy, but there are encouraging signs – one success has been the introduction of a nursing directorate to the ministry (see column, right).

“They’re definitely making inroads,” says Jane. “The ministry is paying more attention to ZUNO, which is a huge leap for them.”

### What’s next?

Phase 1 of the project finished in March and phase 2, which will run until the end of 2018, is now underway. The key objectives are:

- a ZUNO-led campaign to review Zambia’s theatre nursing curriculum
- rolling out the safe surgery checklist to other sites in Lusaka and Kabwe, and encouraging the ministry of health to adopt it nationally
- supporting ZUNO to plan continuing professional development modules for nursing staff
- supporting ZUNO to boost its membership and revenue.

*Phase 1 was funded by the Tropical Health and Education Trust through the Department for International Development’s Health Partnership Scheme.*

## THE VIEW FROM HERE



**Rachel Cooper**  
RCN International Adviser

Alongside implementation of the WHO safe surgery checklist, the RCN has also been helping ZUNO strengthen its policy, public affairs and influencing role.

Traditionally, the Chief Nursing Officer worked to the Medical Director and had limited direct access to political leaders within the Zambian Ministry of Health. ZUNO lobbied for a stronger voice within the ministry and in May their efforts were rewarded with the announcement of a separate Nursing Directorate and Director of Nursing.

The new directorate has direct access to the permanent secretary and other political leaders, and this acknowledges that quality nursing care is a priority. This follows the publication of a strategic plan for improving nursing professionalism in February.

This promotion of the nursing voice contrasts sharply with the situation in the UK, where structural changes within the Department of Health have weakened the presence of the nursing voice within the Government and made it less able to contribute to policy debate.

The creation of the Nursing Directorate in the Zambian ministry will ensure that ZUNO can shape proposed policies and work with clinical and medical leaders to develop multi-disciplinary working.

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



# 10 FEATURES

## Working together

Admiral Nurse Angela Moore is finding new ways to support patients with dementia who are admitted to Hinchingbrooke Hospital



Family members are encouraged to stay throughout their relative's admission

Angela knows how important support from family carers can be for patients with dementia. That's why she's introduced a carers' passport into her place of work. As an Admiral Nurse, or specialist dementia nurse, she's seen how passports help reduce anxiety for patients as well as making it clear to carers that they are welcome and valued.

Using the passport scheme, family members are encouraged to stay throughout their relative's admission. They're given a hospital badge that clearly identifies them as a carer and allows staff to see, at a glance, they have permission to visit at any time. "We recognise that this may be one of the few chances they have for some respite but they're a valued part of the

team and if they want to be involved they can be. It means we might have to have a few more discussions but this all helps us provide the best care for the patient," says Angela.

When an older adult with dementia is admitted to acute care family carers are an important source of information. Angela says it makes a big difference when carers are involved in providing care, communicating with patients and discharge planning. She's made her work a multi-disciplinary project by getting doctors on board too.

"When a patient is admitted, a carer's role changes and they may feel excluded from care and decision making even though they may have been giving the majority

### Did you know?

- Patients with dementia stay in hospital twice as long as other patients.
- 88% of carers said either no hospital staff or only some understood the needs of people with dementia.
- Age and complexity increases the risk of admission to acute care.
- Compared with other patients people with dementia are at higher risk of poorer health outcomes.
- Family carers of people with dementia are their most important support in practical, personal and economic terms.

of care to the patient at home,” she says. “But by improving our communications with carers, they’re better able to understand the goals of care and be part of the decision-making process.”

But introducing the scheme hasn’t come without challenges, as Angela explains. “We say relatives can stay but some staff have questioned how this can work with the traditional ‘two to a bed’ visiting rule. Some staff initially saw the carers’ presence as an intrusion. But they soon saw that having them there improved care beyond anyone’s expectations.”

## Quality of life

Angela has also addressed the lack of knowledge, training and equipment in her workplace which she felt was having an impact on the way staff were able to communicate with patients with dementia. She successfully applied for charitable funding through the Friends of Hinchingsbrooke to improve the patients’ environment.

As a result new facilities and activities have been introduced, and quality of life has taken centre stage. The day room has been decorated and moved to the middle of the ward and a new, bigger table has been brought in for more social dining. “It’s lovely to see people sat talking dining, knitting, and sewing,” says Angela. “And there’s been a huge improvement in patients’ nutrition and well-being.”

## Spreading the word

Angela says working as an Admiral Nurse has provided her with an opportunity to work at an advanced level and focus on her passion to improve dementia care. But not satisfied with the overhaul of care she’s introduced into her workplace, she’s recently taken her message to the Women’s Institute who have thrown their weight behind this work too. She’s also an ambassador for John’s Campaign, a charity that calls for easy access to carers for patients with dementia who are admitted to hospital.

Angela’s support for her patients and their carers recognises the vital role carers can play and that they are more than simply visitors. “When children are admitted to

hospital, no one questions that their parents should continue to look after them. Why not for others? They’re an essential part of the patient’s support team,” she says.

Dawne Garrett, RCN Professional Lead for Care of Older People and Dementia, said the College has been a long-standing supporter of Admiral Nurses and John’s Campaign. “The work that Angela and other Admiral Nurses do is vital for the care and wellbeing of many people,” she added.

Find out more about John’s Campaign at [johnscampaign.org.uk](http://johnscampaign.org.uk)

Angela will be speaking at the RCN Older People’s Forum and British Geriatrics Society conference on 20 September. Find out more at [www.rcn.org.uk/olderpeople17](http://www.rcn.org.uk/olderpeople17)



## What is an Admiral Nurse?

Admiral Nurses are specialist dementia nurses who give expert practical, clinical and emotional support to families living with dementia. The support they provide to families enables them to make informed choices and decisions. Admiral Nurses also act in a consultancy role, educating generalist staff to recognise advanced and end-of-life care in dementia.

There are fewer than 200 Admiral Nurses in the UK and Angela is one of just 10 working in acute care.

Find out more at [www.dementiauk.org](http://www.dementiauk.org)

## THE VIEW FROM HERE



## Owain Jones

Former dementia nurse

Working with someone living with dementia has its challenges but we just need to remember the person and treat them as we would want to be treated.

Very little fazed me in the role but I remember trying to persuade an older man to do a mini mental-state examination to test his level of cognisance functioning. He told me he would only do it if I could name all of Russian composer Shostakovich’s symphonies. I went away and learnt them all – and he agreed to take the test!

I’ve nursed people living with early-onset dementia too. This presents its own challenges as patients are often physically strong and dementia in all its forms leaves patients feeling frightened and confused, which can result in aggressive behaviour. It’s not their fault, but on one ward I was one of five members of staff who were injured while caring for one patient.

All too often we had only limited time to talk to patients, but when they opened up about their pasts, I would hear fascinating stories of what happened to them 30 or 40 years ago. These positive outcomes really made the job worth doing.

Owain is now a lecturer at the University of South Wales.

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



## Room for improvement

It's back to school for millions of children this month. But for some, the plummeting number of school nurses means they'll never see the classroom. Susan Embley reports



Children with conditions such as asthma, diabetes, epilepsy or behavioural disorders require specialist care and support at school. Others may need assistance with breathing or enteral feeding. And it's up to school nurses to lead this care; training teachers to identify warning signs and intervene if a child is in danger.

Since 2010 there's been a steady decline in NHS-funded school nurses, with a 16% drop in numbers in England. According to NHS statistics, the number of school nurses in England in March 2017 stood at just over 2,500. And the falling numbers mean some children are being barred from the classroom because there is no one to support their health needs.

The RCN says this is unacceptable. "It is completely unjust that children can't go to school because of their health conditions," says Fiona Smith, RCN Professional Lead for Children and Young People's Nursing. "Every child has

the right to an education and it is the Government's responsibility to make that happen."

And it's not just children with complex health needs who are suffering from the downturn in school nurses. There's wide spread recognition that poor health contributes to underachievement in education and reduction in career prospects; but the number of children who are overweight or who have low self-esteem and mental health problems is increasing.

### RCN toolkit

School nurses perform a key role in the reduction of child health inequalities through provision of health education and information, targeted interventions, and signposting to other services. To empower school nurses and those working with children and young people, the RCN launched its updated *School Nurse Toolkit* at the RCN School Nurses Conference last month. It covers all the key

points of school nursing, from helping children with long term conditions to providing mental health support and promoting healthy lifestyles.

### Early health promotion

Suzanne Watts, Chair of the RCN Children and Young People's Staying Healthy Forum, says: "School nurse numbers are declining. Coupled with larger caseloads for school nurses and an increase in the number of students, the lack of nurses is detrimental to broader health issues in schools. It's widely accepted that if we can promote good health early in schools, it has a positive effect later in life. Health promotion is important, as well as supporting those children who have additional health care needs. The toolkit focuses on giving guidance for school nurses on the core principles of school nursing."

At the conference, Suzanne and her colleagues called upon the Government to address the school nurse crisis, so that every child gets the education they deserve. "There are a number of issues around training and budget cuts in post-qualification training. Austerity is having a big impact on children's health, especially those from poorer families. School nurses are doing some really good work despite all these pressures and we hope the new toolkit will be something useful for them."

You can view the *RCN School Nurse Toolkit* at [www.rcn.org.uk/publications](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publications)

Discover more RCN learning events at [www.rcn.org.uk/events](http://www.rcn.org.uk/events)



It's completely unjust that children can't go to school because of their health conditions



# Discounted Car and Home Insurance for RCN members

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The Royal College of Nursing acts as an Introducer Appointed Representative to the Liverpool Victoria group of companies for General Insurance and Life Insurance.

## Become a Delirium champion

The RCN's Older People's Forum is encouraging nursing staff to become delirium champions to help improve early identification in older people

A new initiative, supported by My Dementia Improvement Network, will raise awareness of the importance of quickly diagnosing delirium and offer health care staff the tools to identify the condition. With more older people than ever living alone at home, it is often down to community health care workers to spot the early signs of delirium and to know how to escalate a case.

Delirium is a common yet little-known medical condition that can have serious or even life-threatening consequences. Older people who are living with other long term conditions, particularly dementia, are vulnerable to

delirium, and are also most likely to be left undiagnosed.

Current research estimates that around 15-20% of patients over the age of 65 who present at the emergency department are suffering with delirium and it is believed that many will have been delirious for several days at this point.

Chair of the forum, Vicki Leah, said: "Having delirium champions in the community will make a huge difference to the number of cases and the extent of the delirium. Being able to recognise and

implement treatment plans for delirium sooner will prevent unnecessary injuries and hospital admissions. Being admitted to hospital often makes the patient even more disorientated, exacerbating the level of delirium."

Delirium champions will be provided with a resource pack to help raise awareness and implement a delirium escalation plan in their workplace.

To find out more about becoming a delirium champion, visit the page [www.rcn.org.uk/delirium-champion](http://www.rcn.org.uk/delirium-champion)



Having delirium champions in the community will make a huge difference

### Don't discount delirium

An acute confusional state that has a sudden onset, delirium is often mistaken for symptoms of dementia or simply old-age and can sometimes go untreated for long periods of time. Know how to spot the signs by looking out for:

AROUSAL (AWAKENESS)	THINKING	PERCEPTION	FUNCTION	BEHAVIOUR
More sleepy than usual	Poor concentration	Seeing things	Less mobility	Refusing to co-operate
More alert or active than usual	Slow responses	Hearing things	Less movement	Withdrawn
Hard to wake up	More confused	Paranoid	Restless/agitated	Change in attitude
			Not eating	Change in communication
			Sleep problems	

## Forum steering committee vacancies

Join a network of specialist nursing staff at the forefront of RCN activities.

Applications are currently open for the following RCN forum steering committees:

- Cancer and Breast Care
- ENT-Maxillofacial
- History of Nursing Society
- Midwifery
- Society of Orthopaedics and Trauma Nursing

To find out more and apply, go to [www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved](http://www.rcn.org.uk/get-involved)

The deadline for applications is Friday 15 September.

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT



### Nursing in Justice and Forensic Health Care Forum

#### Who's the Chair?

Jessica Davidson, Senior Clinical Forensic Charge Nurse, SE Scotland Police Custody Healthcare and Forensic Examination Service.

#### How did the forum get started?

Two forums merged towards the end of last year. With plenty of crossover issues and interests, joining forces offers access to a wider range of expertise and even more influence in the professional domain.

#### Recent highlights?

A joint fringe event at Congress with the Older People's Forum on "Nursing across the Lifespan", which looked at the changing demographic of prison populations. A new Facebook page has also offered a great new resource for forum members.

#### What's next?

The forum are hoping to roll out a health and wellbeing initiative next year, which will offer nurses working



in the industry practical resources for de-stressing, unwinding, and leaving the job behind at the end of the day.

#### Why join?

Jessica says: "It's an amazing opportunity to represent the RCN in your chosen area of expertise. Not only can it open up great career opportunities, it also gives you access to a whole range of amazing people within your speciality. There's no better way to get involved, get things on the agenda and really make a difference."

Find out more about the Nursing in Justice and Forensic Health Care Forum here: [www.rcn.org.uk/forums](http://www.rcn.org.uk/forums) or visit their Facebook page

## WHAT I'M THINKING



### Suzan Robinson Southey RCN Advanced Nurse Practitioner Forum member

When I worked in Australia, I noticed how much more formalised and structured the advanced practitioner role is and how this led to higher levels of professional credibility and confidence.

I really feel it is important the advanced practice elements that define roles such as consultant nurses and ANPs are formally recognised in the UK as well. I jumped at the chance to go through the new RCN credentialing process.

Credentialing has real value as a consolidation of practice and education. It also formally acknowledges the work undertaken in advanced practice and the academic background and achievements required at this level.

Considering the overall structure of multi-professional health care, it is especially important to have systems like this in place.

As a senior nurse in a consultant role, having this credential has really allowed me to celebrate what I have achieved and the work I do. It has also given me more professional confidence when changing posts or leading others through the advanced programme.

If you'd like to find out more about RCN credentialing or submit a portfolio of evidence for consideration, please visit [www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing](http://www.rcn.org.uk/credentialing) or email [credentialing@rcn.org.uk](mailto:credentialing@rcn.org.uk)

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



## ONE THING I'VE LEARNED...

### ...from the RCN Travel Health Conference

"I have worked in the field of travel health for many years but was cheerfully oblivious to the extent of female genital mutilation and how many women are affected in the UK and globally. Learning about this at the conference has really opened my eyes."

Mary Kedward, Independent Travel Health Nurse Advisor, RCN Public Health Forum member

"VFRs – people visiting friends and relatives abroad or returning to their place of birth – bring the largest burden of infectious disease to the UK. Learning about and discussing this at the conference made me realise how important it is to raise vaccination awareness among this group."

Carole Jenner, Practice Nurse, RCN Public Health, GPN and Diabetes Forums member

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

# 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)

## RCN and BGS Joint Older People's Conference

### Older people's services: clinicians leading together

**20 September**  
RCN HQ  
20 Cavendish Square  
London W1G 0RN

As the largest focus for adult nursing in the UK, caring for older people requires diverse expertise from a wide range of health care professionals. The over-60s is the fastest growing group in society, so it's inevitable that most health care workers will come into contact with older people. The RCN Older People's Forum

and British Geriatrics Society (BGS) are running this joint conference for nursing staff in all settings. It will cover a range of care for older people including dementia, depression in older people and help for older transgender people.

This year's conference themes include:

- innovative services led by nurses and medics relating to the care of older people
- the interface between medicine and nursing
- multi-disciplinary team working
- leading teams.



📞 Book a place on 02920 546460 or visit [www.rcn.org.uk/olderpeople17](http://www.rcn.org.uk/olderpeople17)

You can also download a booking form and send to [eventsreg@rcn.org.uk](mailto:eventsreg@rcn.org.uk)

## RCN Northern Ireland

### Public health networking evening

**17 October 6pm-8pm**  
RCN Northern Ireland  
17 Windsor Avenue  
Belfast BT9 6EE

This is a free event for registered nurses with an interest in public health. Professor Eileen Evason will give an overview of the recent social welfare reform in Northern Ireland. She has produced numerous articles relating to poverty, social security and other issues. In 2015 she was tasked with delivering a report on measures to mitigate welfare reform as part of the Fresh Start Agreement.

📞 To book your place, visit [www.rcn.org.uk/publichealthNI](http://www.rcn.org.uk/publichealthNI) or email [cst@rcn.org.uk](mailto:cst@rcn.org.uk) or call the Corporate Support Team on 02890384600

## RCN Wales

### Child development seminar

**27 September 9.30am-12.30pm**  
RCN Wales  
Ty Maeth, King George V Drive  
East, Cardiff CF14 4XZ

This morning seminar aims to explain the process of child development. The session begins with an exploration of development in utero, then examines child development from birth to five years. The session includes interactive ideas which can be used with children and their families.

Open to registered nurses, health care support workers, pre-registration nursing students and professionals working in child health, topics include:

- biological and physical changes that occur in children as they grow



- developmental milestones in four main areas:
  1. social and emotional
  2. language/communication
  3. cognitive (learning, thinking, problem solving)
  4. movement/physical development.

📞 The closing date for applications is Wednesday 13 September. For further information, an application form or to make a card payment, contact Rhona Workman on 02920 680713 or email [cpdwales@rcn.org.uk](mailto:cpdwales@rcn.org.uk)