

# Knowledge and innovation action plan for 2014-2018



Royal College  
of Nursing

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Our knowledge and innovation action plan will help us to:

- continue to develop new knowledge
- evaluate its impact
- help people use knowledge and innovate
- transform care by sharing knowledge.

We want to make it easier for nursing staff to use knowledge in practice and policy making and for them to feel confident and able to use research and innovation to enhance care. We want the nursing community and other stakeholders to know what knowledge we hold, and how they can access and contribute to it. We want to help grow a dynamic knowledge base for nursing with the coverage, breadth, depth and rigour required for effective decision making and action.

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# Foreword

For more than 50 years the Royal College of Nursing (RCN) has actively engaged in research, recognising its critical relationship with excellence. High quality nursing research and support to innovate and use evidence in practice, enables nurses and those who work with them to develop new knowledge and nursing practice, and to ultimately transform patient care.



Dr Peter Carter,  
Chief Executive &  
General Secretary



Andrea Spyropoulos,  
RCN President

Our health system is facing significant challenges as the population grows, ages and becomes increasingly diverse. People are living longer with diseases that used to be considered acute and life threatening, and nursing care has to continually evolve and develop to effectively respond to these changes and new patient needs. Whilst there has been investment by Government and others in initiatives to help practitioners know what works to improve care, the challenge of finding actionable evidence and developing practice on the ground to directly enhance patients' experiences of care remains. We are also still learning about how to turn ideas into action and to use research findings to develop practice on the issues that matter most to patients, such as symptom management, health promotion and prevention and nursing interventions that enhance well being and quality of life.

As the major professional body for nursing in the UK, the RCN has the responsibility to continuously develop, curate and connect nurses to their professional knowledge base. We are committed to setting and maintaining standards for practice, developing the professional knowledge base, promoting its use in practice and evaluating the impact it has on care.

In this *Knowledge and innovation action plan for 2014-2018* – which we have developed in consultation with members, our staff and partner organisations – we present a vision that describes what we will do to make it possible for nursing staff to use knowledge to transform care. The plan also states how we will work with our members and other stakeholders to achieve that vision. It sets a clear direction of travel for our actions over the next five years, states our priorities and, we hope, will act as a catalyst for creating new partnerships and alliances. Working together over the coming years, we are aiming for a fully research-literate nursing staff and a robust nursing evidence base for all practice settings.

We are determined to maximize the opportunity for knowledge to positively impact on the care experienced by patients and their families, and ensure our members gain fully from the support we offer to their decision making as professionals. We are significantly increasing our members' access to the right standards, knowledge and information to support high quality care and drive improvements in practice.

This action plan and its subsequent implementation will help us to realise our goal of transforming care through using, building, assuring and sharing knowledge.

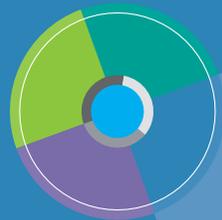
The *Knowledge and innovation action plan for 2014-2018* sets out the ways in which the RCN will use, build, assure and share knowledge over the next five years.

#### The action plan:

- builds on our long and extensive track record of working with members to develop, understand and promote the knowledge required to underpin high quality nursing practice and excellent care delivery
- aligns our knowledge activity with the overarching RCN strategy and key priorities for members and health and social care services across the UK
- makes clear the role that knowledge plays in delivering excellence in practice, shaping health policies, influencing nursing development and supporting pre-registration education and lifelong learning
- recognises the contribution of knowledge in supporting positive employee/employer relationships and effective representation of nurses and nursing locally and nationally
- will enable us to co-ordinate activities across the RCN and determine which we lead, those we seek to influence and who we intend to work with. It will inform the allocation of resources to ensure maximum effectiveness and value for money.

#### Developing nurses and nursing through knowledge and innovation to transform care ensures:

- patients, service users and carers express the value and positive difference nursing knowledge and skills makes to their experience of care
- nursing care is person centred, safe and effective, wherever delivered or received, because registered nurses (RNs) and health care support workers (HCSWs), including nursing assistants, in partnership with the people they care for, make decisions and take action based on the best available evidence
- RNs and HCSWs contribute to the continuing development of nursing knowledge nationally and internationally, and patients, service users and carers are active partners with us in developing health and social care research evidence
- RNs and HCSWs are decision makers locally, nationally and internationally, whose use of evidence and knowledge in making decisions is consistent and valued
- RNs, HCSWs, the public, patients, service users and carers choose the RCN as a preferred and trusted source of nursing knowledge
- the RCN is identified as a champion of nursing excellence in knowledge and innovation and their translation into practice.



## Goal 1: Use knowledge in practice and policy

We promote the use of knowledge to influence policy and to inform decisions and nursing actions. We provide tools and help people develop the skills and confidence to ask questions, make evidence-informed decisions, innovate and adapt in response to changing needs.

### Objectives

Registered nurses (RNs) and health care support workers (HCSWs) have the knowledge and skills appropriate to their sphere of practice that enable them to seek and use knowledge in decision making and action.

Knowledge is used to underpin professional decision making and nursing actions.

RNs and HCSWs innovate, using what works in new ways, building on what looks promising and designing new ways of enhancing and transforming patient care.

### Actions

We will work with education providers and other organisations to influence the development of RN and HCSWs practical skills and confidence in seeking and using knowledge, including information literacy, evaluation techniques, safety science and quality improvement methods.

We will make explicit the value of a research-literate workforce, demonstrating the contribution those skills make to safe, effective person-centred care.

We will promote the inclusion and use of robust economic evidence and nursing knowledge in the continuous pursuit of care transformation, including guidance and policies issued by the RCN and other organisations.

We will develop and signpost resources that support the implementation of evidence informed guidance and consensus standards.

We will seek to support a community of nursing innovators, including practitioners, researchers and patients interested in developing, co-creating, adopting and enhancing nurse-led innovation in practice.

We will seek to influence how a research literate workforce is recognised by employers and education providers, and that RNs and HCSWs are given time for lifelong learning of analytical skills and expertise in using knowledge in practice.

We will promote mentorship and supervision, by and for, nurse leaders and emerging nurse leaders, to support them to confidently and effectively lead practice and service improvement.

We will collaborate with partners in higher education, practice and across professional bodies to support clinical academic careers and develop models of working that shape practice priorities, promote research and innovation in practice and promote the use of evidence in care transformation.

We will encourage nurses to publish their work so that others can benefit from their experience and learning.



## Goal 2: Build a dynamic knowledge base of sufficient coverage and depth

We contribute to and maintain a knowledge base for nursing, ensuring that our input to national and international multi-professional health research agendas is explicit. This contribution includes identifying and helping to fill gaps in standards, guidance and knowledge resources of relevance to nursing, and continuing to build the authoritative collection on nursing in the UK.

### Objectives

Patient care and nursing/social care service decisions are informed by evidence and patient experience.

The research capacity and capability of the nursing research workforce is increased and commensurate with the level at which they are working.

The value of evidence informed practice relevant to nursing is understood by policy makers, health and social care professionals, patients and the public.

The RCN collection is recognised as the authoritative nursing collection in the UK.

### Actions

We will review research and synthesise knowledge and information on issues for nursing and nurses that have been prioritised by the RCN.

We will seek opportunities for co-producing knowledge with partners from across the health and social care sector and patient communities.

We will maintain a strategic alliance with a specialist primary research team.

We will promote the uptake and value of clinical academic careers and clinical research nursing and their impact on the growth of the nursing knowledge base.

We seek to influence the research policies of organisations that fund health and social care research to ensure that nursing's contribution to patient experience and the effectiveness of care are fully represented.

We seek to address the gaps identified in the knowledge base for nursing by influencing the key research activities of organisations that fund health and social care research.

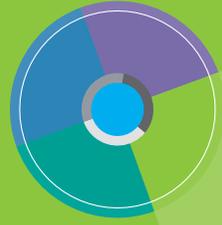
We will build and sustain networks, partnerships and strategic alliances that seek to identify gaps in knowledge to improve nursing practice - locally, nationally and internationally.

We will identify priorities for knowledge development that come from innovation in practice, identifying what looks promising and what should be tested further.

We will lobby for investment in schemes that provide mentorship, training and access to fellowships/funding for RNs and HCSWs showing an interest in doing research.

We will develop co-ordinated and sustained activities across the UK to highlight the link between positive working environments and improved care.

We will continue to grow the nursing knowledge base by proactively collecting, storing and preserving physical and digital content, including the organisational memory of the RCN.



### Goal 3: Assure a knowledge base of breadth and rigour

Our outputs are evidence-informed, impartial and clear about the source, quality and strength of evidence presented. Our cataloguing of the RCN collection assures its intellectual integrity.

#### Objectives

Professional standards and other knowledge resources produced or endorsed by the RCN meet our quality standards.

RNs, HCSWs and others have confidence in using RCN knowledge resources – they understand the different types of knowledge that exist and know how to use them.

Maintained networks of members with specific expertise are available to undertake peer review and help us quality assure knowledge resources.

RCN research activity is of an optimum standard and has maximum impact.

The RCN collection is a reliable and trustworthy source of nursing knowledge, past and present.

#### Actions

We will apply the RCN quality framework approach to build quality into the standards/knowledge lifecycle and for quality assurance review of all RCN knowledge outputs.

We will be clear about the sources of knowledge and the quality and strength of evidence presented in all our resources.

We will review and expand existing expert networks, developing new ones where needed, to increase opportunities for RNs, HCSWs and others to contribute to quality assurance of RCN knowledge resources.

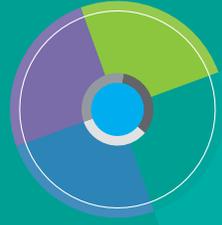
We will continuously improve our internal infrastructure and processes in support of enhancing the evidence base of RCN professional advice and guidance.

We will use appropriate international cataloguing standards to ensure the provenance and content of our holdings are easily accessible to all.

We will apply the RCN quality framework approach to our endorsement and accreditation processes to assure the rigour of externally developed resources.

We will review, and if necessary improve our guidance on types of knowledge and the use of knowledge to inform / transform practice.

We will develop our use of the library and archive catalogues to clearly reflect current clinical status of publications and our corporate memory.



## Goal 4: Share the knowledge we have and enhance ways to access and contribute to it

We connect members to the knowledge they need so they can use it to improve quality of care. Format and content is relevant for people with different levels of expertise, roles, settings and influence. The content and expertise of the RCN library and archive and the staff supporting its use, inspire the nursing community and the public to gain an insight into the past, present and future of nursing.

### Objectives

RCN produced and/or endorsed knowledge resources are designed to suit different users.

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Knowledge is accessible and shared by all.

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Virtual and in-person visitors to the library and archives gain insight into nursing.

### Actions

We will present and package evidence in usable formats, reflecting the different requirements of particular and diverse audiences.

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We will make our professional guidance and advice available through an inclusive range of communication channels.

We will prioritise talking with and hearing from our members about professional nursing issues, taking the opportunity to share innovations, knowledge and professional developments, at RCN Congress and other RCN events.

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We will use innovative ways of engaging with health professionals and members of the public to enable them to access, explore, learn from and contribute to the nursing knowledge base.

We will find new and creative ways of sharing nursing knowledge through physical and virtual exhibitions, seminars, displays and events and social media.

We will work with our members to continuously update our understanding of the ways in which they prefer to access, receive and share knowledge.

We seek to advance the knowledge base for nursing by promoting and facilitating collaboration and networking amongst all our stakeholders.

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We will seek to continuously develop expert customer services that support users and that reflect their diverse needs and our audience engagement model.