Role of the RCN professional leads
The professional leads in the RCN Nursing Department help shape critical decisions about nursing care and the education of students and staff in all settings. They work with national partners to present or represent the RCN’s vision, shape the future role and education of nursing and midwifery staff, and contribute to the new health and social care systems. They provide credible information and evidence for policy makers, commissioners and providers, whilst ensuring the RCN influences and supports a nursing workforce that’s fit to face new challenges in many specialist and diverse areas of nursing practice, research, education and management.

Working across the UK, RCN professional leads have a wide sphere of influence. Their unique contribution covers a range of activities, supporting members, the wider nursing and midwifery professions, and all in line with the requirements of the Royal Charter and the RCN strategic plan. They also help to maintain and build on relationships with members and RCN staff in the RCN regions and countries.
Areas of expertise and specialty

There are 11 professional leads in the RCN Nursing Department covering:

- mental health
- public health
- midwifery and women’s health
- children and young people
- long-term conditions and end of life care
- criminal justice and learning disabilities
- acute, emergency and critical care
- primary and community care
- infection prevention and control
- education
- health care assistants and assistant practitioners.
The professional lead role covers many areas, including providing leadership to a number of membership communities, forums, special interest groups and networks. The following areas highlight just some of the work this role covers.

Leading on specific projects, which can be defined by RCN committees, the membership or agencies like the Department of Health.

Mental health – restrictive interventions guidance.
Positive and Safe.
Fundamentals of end of life care.
Support for carers and young carers.
First Steps for health care support workers.
Female genital mutilation.
Safe staffing for older people.
Renewing the commitment – learning disability.
The nursing contribution to public health.
Resuscitation Council (with BMA).
Knowledge and skills framework for nurses working in pain.
Helping to shape and promote excellence in nursing policy and practice, and to ensure nursing is recognised and defined in wider health and social care policy.

Chief Nursing Officer work streams in all four countries.
Providing evidence to the Health Select Committee.
Public health.
Infection control advice.
Future Nurse Future Workforce.
Public Health Skills and Knowledge Framework.

Providing expert clinical and professional advice, and a registered nursing and midwifery contribution to the organisation.

Responding to members’ clinical queries received via RCN Direct.
Clinical information for RCN parliamentary, policy and communication teams.
Revalidation – supporting members to understand what revalidation means to them through workshops and presentations and providing opportunities to use RCN resources and events as part of the revalidation process through reflection.
Developing resources on accountability and delegation for the nursing team, including online resources, a film and pocket guide to support presentations and member queries.
Executive Nurse Network.
Patient Policy Exchange.

The professional lead for mental health in Northern Ireland is working with colleagues to assist in the development of a network and to provide liaison and uniformity with the UK Mental Health Forum.

Paediatric Nursing Associations of Europe and International Network.

Supporting nurses into board-level roles.
Coaching forum committee members.
Placing and supporting members to represent the RCN on national groups.
Directing the development of professional education and standards for nursing.

RCN Mentorship Project 2015. From today’s support in practice to tomorrow’s vision for excellence (RCN, 2015).

Practice-based learning summit, NMC, RCN and Council of Deans of Health to discuss findings of the above report.


Nursing associate consultation.

Career, education and competency frameworks, for example, pain and children and young people’s cardiac nursing.

2016 sees the RCN celebrating its centenary and the RCN professional leads will continue their diverse and varied work, delivering the RCN’s vision and helping to shape the future role and education of nursing and midwifery staff.
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The RCN represents nurses and nursing, promotes excellence in practice and shapes health policies

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