As a guide in deciding on a course of action or planning a piece of work, follow these steps and ask yourself these questions:

1) Recognise the event, decision or issue
   • Are you being asked to do something that you think might be wrong?
   • Are you aware of potentially illegal or unethical conduct on the part of others?
   • Are you trying to make a decision and are unsure about the ethical course of action?

2) Think before you act
   • Summarise and clarify your issue
   • Ask yourself, why the dilemma?
   • Consider the options and consequences
   • Consider who may be affected
   • Consult others

3) Decide on a course of action
   • Determine your responsibility
   • Review all the relevant facts and information
   • Refer to applicable RCN policies and professional standards
   • Assess the risks and how you could reduce them
   • Contemplate the best course of action
   • Consult others

4) Test your decision
   • Apply the RCN’s mission and values to your decision
   • Make sure you have considered RCN policies, and relevant legal and professional standards
   • Consult others – enlist their opinion of your planned action
   • Consider how your decision might be reported in the media
   • Will it reflect positively on nursing and the RCN?

5) Proceed with confidence
   • Communicate the decision and rationale to stakeholders
   • Reflect upon what was learned
   • Share your success stories with others