A blog is an online article written from the author’s perspective on a topical issue. It’s usually around 300 words long.

A topical issue might be something the RCN is working on or a national news story that affects your nursing specialty.

Once you have your idea or topic and are ready to write about your thoughts on it, bear in mind some of these handy hints.
Your blogs should have:

- Short sentences and paragraphs.
- An authentic voice – yours. Write in the first person, not as part of a group.
- A punchy introduction that pricks the reader’s interest immediately.
- An informal style.
- A point. Have something to say and don’t rant aimlessly.
- Context – something about you. Where do you work? Why does this topic interest you?
- A beginning, a middle and an end – take your reader on a journey.
How genomics is changing nursing

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Linda Bailey  23 JAN 2018  Public Health Forum

Even if it hasn't impacted on your work yet, every branch of nursing will be affected by advances in knowledge about genomics and the human gene.

There is a real possibility that some hereditary conditions, such as haemophilia, will disappear altogether, while treatments for other conditions, such as cancer, will change dramatically. Nurses and midwives working in infertility and maternity services may also find the care, treatment and advice they have traditionally given will change in future.

The recent, rapid advances in what we know about genomes, genetics and epigenetics all have implications for nursing. The work of Francis Crick and James Watson in identifying the structure of DNA in 1953 kick started advances in knowledge about genetics. Then in 1990 new and very rapid advances began with the inception of the human genome project - an international collaboration to map the human genome. The plan was for the project to run for 15 years, but it actually only took 13 years.

Genes can play a role both directly and indirectly in the development of a disease or condition. There are specific genetic disorders such as cystic fibrosis or Huntington's disease, and then there are illnesses influenced by genes which can increase the risk of someone developing a condition, such as cancer.

Gene advances

The first genetic disease to be mapped was Huntington’s Disease in 1983, and in 1994 the BRCA1 gene was first isolated. BRCA1 and BRCA2 have a role in suppressing tumours, but harmful BRCA mutations give women a breast cancer risk five times higher than the normal risk, and an ovarian cancer risk between 10 and 30 times higher. Many other conditions are currently being researched including prostate cancer, type 2 diabetes, macular degeneration and myocardial infarction.

According to the Journal of Gene Medicine, there are currently nearly 2,500 clinical trials involving gene therapy in progress or completed, with the majority of these (64.6%) addressing various cancers. With the advances in knowledge gained through such trials comes a rise in ‘personalised medicine’ with many more treatments being tailored directly at individuals. In December 2017 the New England Journal of Medicine reported a successful trial using gene therapy with people with haemophilia B and another reporting on significant advances in gene therapy for haemophilia A.

If you want to find out more, Health Education England have a free online course for all UK NHS staff Introduction to Genomics.
And try to avoid:

- Being boring, waffling or stating the obvious.
- Being too clever or patronising.
- Being distant from the reader – remember your audience.
- Long sentences and long words, particularly management speak and jargon.
- Too many links – one is ideal.
- References – you’re not writing for an academic audience.
- Over-using exclamation marks!!!!
What happens next?

Start blogging!

Email your blog posts, or any ideas you want to discuss, to your forum professional lead which can be found on your forum webpage.

Don’t forget to include a two sentence biography about your work and a photo.

We’ll provide you with feedback and upload the finished article to your forum website.